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Laird J. Stuart, *Editor*

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DIMENSION

THEOLOGY IN CHURCH AND WORLD

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RESCUING "TRANSCENDENCE" FOR USE IN A THEOLOGY OF HOPE

BY ANTHONY L. HITE

I

THIS ESSAY deals with the role played by the word "transcendence" in contemporary theology, a theology presently struggling with the meaning of hope and the future. The title of the essay is also a bit misleading, however, in that it suggests a fuller treatment of a theology of hope than will be attempted here. The following discussion will deal primarily with "transcendence." Consideration of a theology of hope *per se* will be limited to facets of such a theology which reflect light on "transcendence" and the way it functions in theological discourse. A word is best understood in context.

Furthermore, this paper seeks less to describe the function of transcendence than to prescribe its function. What is sought is some reformative definitions of the term. Theologians have been comfortable with the word for centuries; only recently has it become problematical. Doubt has been cast on the value of the word and some have urged its deletion from the theological vocabulary. In spite of these warnings, some thinkers have sought to understand "transcendence" in the very latest theological formulations. The present discussion offers some tentative support and suggestions for these brave souls. Prior to centering on "transcendence," however, some remarks on the context and character of theological discourse are in order.

II

The Twentieth Century has witnessed shaking discoveries in relation to the significance of our speaking and the meaning of language in human life. Theology, if it is to be responsible, must assess these

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discoveries with an eye toward what theologians do with language. Two particularly important linguistic discoveries have grown out of the works of Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein. James M. Robinson paraphrases Heidegger: "The subject matter of which language speaks is primarily being. It is man's nature to hearken to the call of being . . . or man's nature is defined as linguistic, in that his role is to re-speak, to respond, to answer the call of being."[1] The primacy of language, its vast significance, cannot be overstated according to Robinson. With language we shape life, we give form to experience.

The later Wittgenstein has impressed upon us the fantastic multiplexity of language and the importance of this fact for our dealing with the world in which we have our being. He offers an engaging image of language in the *Philosophical Investigations*. "Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs. . . ."[2] Preserving the image, theology is a neighborhood within the metropolitan orbit, and as such will participate in the life of the city, be affected by, and bound up in, the destiny of the whole complex. So, too, will the life of the whole be affected by the relation of its parts. If theology is to center in proclamation, theological language will be leaven and salt, a change agent operative in the complex of language as a whole.

What we are about here is an attempt to find how the word "transcendence" is to play its role in the life of the theological neighborhood, in the language particular to theology. To do this we must take pains to avoid asking the wrong question. We do not ask, "What does 'transcendence' mean?" We ask, "What does 'transcendence' do?"

If we understand language as a game (a board game, perhaps, like chess), Wittgenstein allows that the meaning of a word *is its role in the game*. A word's meaning will be determined by a description of what the word does, what moves are made with it in the course of the game.[3] Wittgenstein uses another helpful image to describe language:

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[1] James M. Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," *The New Hermeneutic*, ed., James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 47.

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr., G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), Para. 18.

[3] *Ibid.*, Para. 23, 563.

"Think of the tools in a toolbox; there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, . . . The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects."[4] Adding what Heidegger has said of language to these brief remarks by Wittgenstein, it is possible to develop a metaphorical sketch of language which will inform the following considerations of theological language in general and "transcendence" in particular.

Language, it seems, is a large toolbox from which men choose a variety of instruments in their efforts to respond to their being in the world, to give shape and meaning to experience. The metaphor is homely, but the issue of real import centers in the *task* of language, which is to give shape to the world of experience, to articulate the response to one's "being there." The particular tool in question in this discussion is "transcendence." In what ways ought it to be used to bring expression to the experience of hope?

III

As we have seen, "transcendence" has had a checkered career as a theological term. It is, however, a term which theologians are reluctant to abandon. It is a term which appears to the interested observer to be central in the language of Christian theology. Roger Garaudy, the French Marxist and professor, has spurred the curiosity of *Look Magazine*'s editorial staff (and others) because of his desire for serious conversation with the Christian community.[5] One of his greatest interests centers in the notion of transcendence, a notion the professor numbers among Christianity's most important contributions to the task of understanding our humanity.[6]

Garaudy is aware of the difficulty which attaches to "transcendence." "Transcendence is a dangerous expression," he admits, "for its past is heavy with confusions and mystifications."[7] In his attempt to salvage the term, however, Garaudy offers an interesting alternative to the supernatural, cosmological understanding of "transcendence." He uses the word to bring to expression his experience of having crossed the threshold from nature to culture, to historicity. The character of the perceived transition is marked by *wonder*, a sense of awe

[4] *Ibid.*, Para. 11.

[5] Christopher S. Wren, "Can Christians Talk to Communists?" *Look*, Vol. 31, No. 9 (May 2, 1967), pp. 36ff.

[6] Roger Garaudy, "Communists and Christians in Dialogue," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (March, 1967), pp. 206-209.

[7] *Loc.cit.*, p. 208.

on man's part (Garaudy believes his experience to be quite common) at having moved beyond the natural to a responsible and self-initiating existence, a *supernatural* existence.[8] Garaudy thus removes "transcendence" from the cosmological context where it has fared so poorly, and places it in an historical/existential category. "Transcendence" becomes a facet of one's qualitative difference from the rest of nature, an aspect of one's alienation from nature.

IV

For a pointed analysis of the function of "transcendence" in the theological enterprise, we will now turn to the contributions of Ernst Bloch and his commentator from the Christian perspective, Jürgen Moltmann. The latter, like Garaudy, is concerned to establish a common basis for dialogue between Christians and Marxists. Moltmann, as a theologian, tries to assess the contributions of "esoteric Marxism" as much as Garaudy tries to outline and highlight the Christian contributions. Moltmann argues that the avowed atheism of the Marxist "is an atheism opposed to the divine hypostases, which are seen only as a system by which man is eased of the freedom and activity which he requires; . . . it does not deny the major objects of hope in the Bible itself: the Kingdom of God and the Resurrection of the dead." This atheism, suggests Moltmann, should be understood as a denial of the personal God "*for the sake of God* and the Kingdom of God."[9]

Here again the emphasis on man's historical responsibility and his freedom is clearly evident. Pursuing the argument further, one discovers the crucial presupposition which underlies this emphasis on freedom and responsibility. It is a rather complex presupposition, a vision of man and his place in the cosmos which takes shape around two very large words, "openness" and "possibility." These two words themselves grow out of an understanding of the movement of man which is always a being-on-the-way toward tomorrow, toward the future.

Moltmann's measurement of the contribution of Ernst Bloch to an understanding of man's life as "open-ended" is worthy of a lengthy quotation:

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[8] *Loc.cit.*, pp. 208-209.

[9] Jürgen Moltmann, "Hope Without Faith: An Eschatological Humanism Without God," *Is God Dead?* ed. Johannes Metz (New York: Paulist Press, 1966), p. 27.

> The novel contribution of the philosophy of Ernst Bloch is that he does not reduce this open-endedness of man and his hope to a mere subjectivity, adjourning, as it were, his fulfillment to a hereafter; instead he aligns an 'ontology of the openness of the world to man' with the 'openness of man to the world.' The openness of man is apparent in his hopes, and it *corresponds to the openness of the world process*, apparent in its possibilities; actuality is a process. In the course of its actuality, everything that is real modulates into that which is possible.[10] (Italics mine).

Here Bloch brings, or so it seems, the concern expressed by many, including Garaudy, that man be seen in his freedom, in his historicity, together with the concern expressed by Whitehead and his followers that the world be seen as becoming, that it be seen as process. The conjunction of both kinds of openness creates what Bloch has called the *category of possibility*. What we will attempt to show is that "transcendence" acquires its functional significance for theology in relation to the category of possibility.

The tremendous significance of these claims for the openness of man and the world can be seen most clearly, perhaps, when the claims themselves are juxtaposed with what has been a long-standing tendency in the history of ideas, the proclivity to create closed systems of thought, to fashion a worldview which eliminates surprise, the unaccountable, the new. The "Medieval Synthesis" and the Classical cosmologies of the Graeco-Roman era are paradigmatic cases of closed conceptions of reality. Openness and ambiguity are, for all intents and purposes, eliminated by these efforts at shaping our experience into a complete and coherent whole. Moltmann, however, inspired by Bloch, perceives the essential difficulty with such conceptions of reality. Eliminating the categories of radical historical change and human possibility, they eliminate hope. The discovery that history is a function of choice and that human cooperation must be taken seriously, even if one wants to say that there are other decisive factors involved in the process. To deny this is to return to nature, to pluck man from his place in culture. In closed systems of reality the feeling of hope, a genuine human experience, becomes a vain and empty illusion, ground to dust by the recurring of the inevitable.

It is well to note, however, that there are gains as well as losses in viewing reality as a closed system, in seeing things in terms of cyclical patterns and static categories. Mastery of an environment which stays still long enough to be dissected, or which will come 'round again for another try, is a gain. Protection against the break-up of the familiar and the manageable, a sense of security in the predictable, these too are benefits of static conceptions of experience, or of predictable dynamisms. The benefits are seductive and the tendency toward closure is deeply rooted.

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Gestalt psychology has shown the closure pattern in human response very clearly. Given a melange of lines only faintly suggestive of a human face, most subjects will "fill in what is *obviously* missing" and report that they *see* a face. The open quality of the melange becomes closed off in the perceptual-conceptual process. This movement characterizes the widest range of our experience in the world.

The overt claim, on the part of the thinkers we are considering, to openness and freedom is a covert call to courage and responsibility. It is a call to bear the pain of ambiguity, a call to endure the threat of *loss*, which threat is perceived more clearly than either Christian or Marxist might like to think when they malign "reactionaries" for foot-dragging. It is for this reason that the ramifications of the implications of "openness" argument should be considered from a pastoral standpoint. Systems of reality lend support to human beings when they stand before the world. Rigid systems relieve the responsibility to stand on one's own feet. That is granted. But no system at all, and the inability to perceive supportive regularity produce a breakdown in the functioning of both individuals and societies.

Any attempt to introduce a new conceptual apparatus must account for the threat of loss which attends such an attempt. Furthermore, all such attempts to introduce change must live in the tension which resistance to change creates. Crucial to the success and acceptance of a conceptual scheme which focuses on process and responsibility, on openness and freedom, is its ability to reduce the tension outlined above to a manageable level. Closure, which is a necessity for men if they are to operate effectively in the world, must be achieved by the recognition that our task is not creating closure, but closing in on the fact of openness. Quite a paradox! To put it much too simply, men must be shown that they can more fully realize a destiny which is real by keeping their view of themselves and their world open. Man must understand himself as process within process.

No matter how rigidly one insists on openness, however, it is more elusive than we can imagine. The mercurial quality of such a conceptual orientation demands linguistic tools of fine quality if premature closure is to be avoided. "Transcendence" is a linguistic tool aptly suited for the task.

V

"Transcendence" must be used, first of all, to wedge open the category of possibility and hold it open in the face of the pressing tendency to closure. "Transcendence" rings a reminder bell; it re-tells our identity. In functioning as a wedge, "transcendence" creates time for discovery within the category of possibility. Several kinds of discovery are involved.

There is the dizziness (Kierkegaard) born of sensing radical freedom, wondering where to turn. "Possibility" itself expresses the presence of options, and the presence of options calls for assessment and consideration, a search through the collection of precedents set down in history. There is the discovery that a qualitative change has transpired with the present moment, a change born of what has already gone by. Such a discovery calls for innovation where precedent is irrelevant or absent.

"Transcendence" signals our presence at the frontier of the future. The word reminds us that we are about to receive the future and that we are responsible to take it. Attempts at articulating a conception of reality which transforms the open future into a disguised repetition of the past are attempts which seal off the border between present and future. Such a move is tantamount to the destruction of the future itself. "Transcendence" keeps the border open.

"Transcendence" bolts the door to the past, it blocks the escape route. The word calls all slogans which begin "Return . . ." into question; it re-directs all efforts away from regression and turns one in the direction of the future, the direction of response. "Transcendence" speaks of the grace of life, i.e., it expresses our perception of life as *given* and of ourselves as enabled to respond to this given in speech and deed (speech with the body), shaping the given as *our* life.

At this juncture, something must be said about the shape of response. Here again "transcendence" functions in relation to what is done with the category of possibility. There are several related patterns of closure which "transcendence" must interrupt if the shape of our response to the future is to be theologically responsible, i.e. faithful. The conception of development may introduce the idea that behind what happens there is a map, a charted course set down in the misty past which life is duty bound to follow as it unfolds. Then, of course, the aim of science is to discover the map hidden under the visible so as to be able to anticipate and plan for change. The aim to predict is always linked to the desire to control. Science eventuates in technology. Whoever said, "We are all Platonists," is to be commended for his insight. Science may well be an attempt not to cope with change at all, but to eliminate it.

To speak to science of the "dimension of the transcendent" is to demand that the openness of life and the category of possibility be taken seriously. To speak of the transcendent is not to ask that prediction or control or attempts at either be abandoned. To speak of "transcendence" in this way is to demand space for the future in its futurity, the future whose possibilities imply our responsibilities. As Ebeling notes, it is too easy to dehumanize the future when seeking to control it. As a matter of fact, to control it *is* to dehumanize it, and to deny its character as the sphere of faith. Fortunately, it never can be controlled, a fact signaled to us by the horror we feel in the face of the future and the fatuous attempts we make to close it off.[11]

At this point in the present discussion, it is clear that the reformative use of "transcendence" raises several important questions with regard to the traditional affirmations of the transcendence of God. It would be impossible to treat this matter in any thorough way here. We may, perhaps, expand on earlier remarks concerning language as a response to "being in the world" in an attempt to redesign a proper stance in relation to these traditional issues.

VI

A tentative hypothesis is advanced here concerning the way in which theologians have connected "transcendence" with "God" in formulating doctrines of God. Theology grows up in response to the experience of theologians within a given historically conditioned cultural matrix. The way they perceive the traditional resources of their discipline (including Scripture), and their understanding of the present situation to which they must address themselves will, in part, be a function of the current worldviews and existential presuppositions which are internalized in the process of their own socialization.

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[11] Gerhard Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, tr. Ronald Gregor Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), pp. 172ff.

One of the most salient features of such presuppositional structures has been, up until the last few decades of Western culture, what might be termed an *authoritarian* orientation. The warrant for claims of all kinds regarding the proper shape of life (including both ethical and metaphysical) has been an appeal to some sort of authority. Reference is made to some final court of appeal—the Church, the Word delivered from on high, the expert. Theology, given this kind of analysis, has been a linguistic effort to provide normative descriptions and prescriptions for life and our living of it. "God" has functioned as a referent, used to involve hazy ontological warrant for theological claims and demands. These demands are usually for some form of closed conception of reality and for an ethical demand system correlative to it.

"Transcendence" has functioned as a productive device, securing the hazy ontological referrent, "God," against any efforts at analysis or assessment on purely rational grounds. Needless to say, such trickery, born of whatever motives, will no longer protect or preserve the security of authoritarian claims. The notion of authority has been called into question and has, so far as human life has been concerned, dissolved into a disturbing recognition of human freedom and its concomitant responsibility. Man is experiencing himself as one who is on his own in the world, even if he affirms this experience "before God." (Bonhoeffer).

Now, it seems, one can speak of "transcendence" only as a word related to anthropology, not to talk of God. The critical problem of developing a viable doctrine of God is obviously beyond the scope of this paper. But the problem remains. The age old problem of God's sovereignty and Christ's lordship set in tension with what theologians now affirm as man's historicity and his freedom will not be resolved, however, by maintaining a view of God as unassailable in his transcendence. Some image of the cooperation of the life of God *within* the life of man is called for. John Cobb strives for such an image, drawing upon the resources of Whitehead's process philosophy. At present, this seems to be the most likely candidate for a functional resolution of the tension described above.[12]

Theology must seek, in the face of man's new-found freedom, to articulate what will be a faithful response to the "call of being," to draw up designs for acting and constructing. At the same time, theology must seek to follow the reality of God, now relocated in the midst of the process of existence, as that reality continues to move out from under the linguistic grids we *must* impose upon it. There can, after all, be no response without language. The reality of God, continually moving out from under language, may be termed a transcendent reality, a Beyond in our midst, to paraphrase Bonhoeffer. The shape of our response to such a reality must be guided, in part, by the use of "transcendence" in attempts to provide linguistic content for that response.

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[12] John B. Cobb, *A Christian Natural Theology Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965).

THE DYNAMICS OF LIVING GRIEF

BY ROBERT G. COTTER

INTRODUCTION

THE DIRECTOR of a nationally recognized, leading institution for the training of Cerebral Palsy Children, once confronted the present writer with his pet project. "Every minister and every student for the ministry should be required to take a course on working with the handicapped child, *and with their parents.* It would be good for the minister. And above all you are the one who can do the parents the most good in helping them come to terms with their child's handicap." What this man, who has been a pioneer in his field, said has been echoed in my ears by others who are involved with the same area of human life. A specialist in the area of Neurological Pediatrics once remarked, "You as a minister have a special role to perform for the parents of these children." A Medical Director of a children's hospital specializing in treating the handicapped and birth defective child also reaffirmed what the others had said, "In our work we realize that it is not enough just to treat the child. We must treat the whole family, or else what was a family with a handicapped child may become a handicapped family." He went on to say, "A man's faith has a lot to do with how he copes with the problems of having a child who is handicapped." The diagnosis of these three men in the field of handicapped children should be sufficient to warrant our concern as a profession with the problems of helping parents accept and understand what is going on in themselves.

Further, if this professional advice is not sufficient, let the pastor attempt to deal with the situations of the handicapped in his own parish. He will soon realize the limits of his preparation in the face of this perplexing, persistent problem. He may, if he is sensitive to the

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situation, be supportive or simply silently faithful because there seems to be nothing that can be done or said. Now, support may be helpful in the immediate situation of the crisis of discovery when the overwhelming reality of the facts threatens to completely undo the psychological make-up of the parents. However, simple support is *not enough* for the long struggle which the parents must fight against despair, doubt, and darkness. It is too easy, as Hiltner has reminded us, for support to degenerate into a dependancy that is neither helpful nor healthy. In these cases of long-term hardship, for the family to become overdependant would mean that in place of a child on crutches, we would have a family leaning on the crutches of support. In place of support, what is needed is a ministry of *sustaining,* which as Hiltner has pointed out, has as the distinguishing feature its aim to be more than simply a standby in a helpless situation. The ministry of sustaining actually sustains only when its aim transcends sustaining in the direction of healing. "Sustaining, if it really sustains, is itself healing within the limits of circumstances."[1]

What the pastor needs to make his ministry one of sustaining instead of simple support is the tools of understanding of what is taking place in the parents. He needs to have some perspective from which he can feel what is happening and some guide to what is normal and healthy development in these cases of hardship. Even more needful is a theological framework which will permit the pastor not only to help build the undergirdings of support, but to assist in the ongoing constructive rebuilding of the structures of life which have been shattered and twisted in the collapse of despair. It is the intent, the purpose and the hope of this paper to provide at least a skeletal theological, pastoral framework in which and through which the pastor can find the tools and the theology to be of help to the parents of handicapped children.

One may wonder how or why this is a problem for pastoral *theology*. As a theological problem for philosophical theodicy, it is easily recognized. "Why has God allowed this to happen to me?" As a practical matter of pastoral care it is also recognized that the pastor help alleviate the suffering. But how is it a problem for pastoral *theology*? With that question in mind, let us close this introductory section by drawing into sharper focus the pastoral *theological* problem at hand. If we take seriously the belief that God intends to meet men with salvation in every experience of life, and if, as can be easily demonstrated, salvation is generally identified with the deliverance from bondage or an escape *out of* a situation which threatens "life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness," then a problem arises. That is, how can those parents who find themselves in an inescapable, threatening situation ever be availed of God's intentions? How can those parents who are bound by the bond of love to a child whose impairment infringes upon their total life ever find that salvation which is God's intention in every experience? What brings help to those whose marriage may be disabled by a heartbreaking disability which their child has suffered? *If* "God intends to meet us with salvation in every experience of life," where, or how, or what is this salvation in this situation? There can be no simple salvation by deliverance *out* of the bondage, for getting *out* could mean only one of three things (a) the death of the child, (b) the rejection of the child, (c) the flight from reality. How can parents be delivered when they are caught in an inescapable bind? That is the theological problem which demands a reinterpretation of salvation in terms of a very practical situation. But before we are finished, we shall, I believe, come to see that salvation is a relative, situational concept. What may be "saving" in one instance may well be "damning" in another. What leads a person to wholeness in one case may bring him to fragmentation in another.

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[1] Hiltner, Seward, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Abingdon Press, New York, 1958), p. 143.

Thus, approaching the problem of a handicapped child's relation to his parents from the perspective of pastoral theology, we seek three things:

1. to understand what is happening,
2. to discover a way of helping by a ministry of sustaining which aims at healing,
3. to reinterpret salvation in terms that fit the situation where deliverance *out of* bondage is not possible.

I. UNDERSTANDING

A. WHEN ACCEPTANCE IS UNACCEPTABLE

Of course, many perspectives are possible as we study the problem of salvation in situations where deliverance out of the bondage is impossible. This paper shall study it from the perspective of a concept which (for want of a better name) we shall call:

Living Grief or Grief for the Living

We could view the problem as one of acceptance. Indeed, acceptance is the angle from which the parental problem of having a handicapped child is usually viewed. However, acceptance is not an adequate idea for at least two reasons. First, no one seems quite sure just what it means to be accepting. "You must accept your handicapped child for what he is." That is the first rule of almost all counsel given to parents by physicians, physical therapists, pamphlets, and books concerned with them. Does this mean that deliverance from despair will come when one "accepts" the inevitability of hopelessness and helplessness which a diagnosis of brain injury or mental retardation may bring? In this case, acceptance would be akin to resignation, a stoic philosophy of grin and bear it. This does not, it seems to me, open the door to deliverance. Such an understanding may produce toleration but never salvation. Salvation, if it means anything, is more than endurance. In most Biblical references, salvation is a joyful experience. Is endurance joyful? Is resignation? I think not. And therefore, I feel that simply to "accept" in the sense of "accepting the inevitable" is not enough.

On the other hand, does acceptance mean parents must realize the added help this child will need, the abundance of hope he will require, the extra encouragement he will have to have just to function to his fullest potential? Such an interpretation may seem more hopeful. However, it may also bind a person to slavery the rest of his life as he toils with every ounce of strength to change the child's condition by a fractional amount. Here, accepting is a spur to challenge, or a burr to intimidate the parent into doing something for the handicapped child. It may produce actions and reactions, but can it produce resignation to the acceptance of the inevitable, or acceptance of a challenge or both, and which of these alternatives is implied when one says, "You must accept your child for what he is"? Acceptance is not adequate counsel because acceptance implies one mode or method of reception is superior, but fails to spell out what that mode is or why. Acceptance as a description of the process of deliverance in cases of handicapped children's parents is unacceptable because it is unclear in its goal.

If acceptance is inadequate because of its lack of clarity in goal, it is also unacceptable as helpful concept because it fails to spell out the "dynamics" involved in the process. Acceptance implies the idea that parents of handicapped children, if they are to find salvation, must enjoy their child for what he is, instead of dwelling on what might have been. "Appreciate him for what he can do, instead of what you hoped he would do." "Understand him for what his actual potential is at the present, instead of underrating him or berating him." These are words sometimes spoken to parents. However, acceptance does not explain how one attains this state of "bliss" in relation to a handicapped child. It is almost as if the term acceptance has become magical and one must only wave it like a wand before the eyes of the parents in order to effect the change. The counsel to be "accepting" stands alone without any insight given as to how, or what is involved, or what may evolve in the process of accepting. "Blessed is he who can accept," is the beatitude, but it is unfortunate if you cannot for there is no counsel given on how to be accepting. Acceptance points to enjoying, appreciating, understanding the child *as he is*, but no one seems to be able to pinpoint why, where, or how a person gains the ability to accept instead of reject. In fact, one writer, intimately and expertly connected with the problem of being such a parent, has written of our confusion. Mary Marguerite Matheny has written, "There seems to be no approach that can be used to prepare all families. Strong individuals have become weak . . . weak have become strengthened by the challenge."[2] Acceptance is unacceptable as a dynamic description of the process of salvation in this specific situation where deliverance from bondage is impossible. It lacks clarity of goal and process involved in finding a new order of life.

B. A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROBLEM

Let us then seek another perspective, which will give a more clarifying slant on the goal of salvation in that it is open to those who cannot be delivered out of a situation of bondage and a more helpful perspective on the process by which this salvation takes place. This is the concept of living grief. Whereas, acceptance is a static concept of support, implying that once accomplished it is done, that is not so with the concept of living grief. This is a dynamic concept that is never completely finished, but is a process of development.

The concept of living grief as a therapeutic approach or as a way of salvation for the parent of a handicapped child focuses not on what the parents must begin to *do*, but on what must come to an *end* before a realistic beginning can take place, before a new deliverance *within* this bondage can be affected. The idea of "living grief" simply stated (oversimply perhaps) is that before the new structures which will be giving life its new meaning can take place, the old, lost structures must be *experienced and dealt with as a true loss.* The difficulty of parents arises when, as a result of our culturally conditioned positive mindedness, or our medical over-optimism, we rush toward the acceptance of the new without awareness of the process of getting rid of the old feelings and attitudes. We do not allow time, nor seek an understanding of the truly negative experiences of loss of the old attitudes toward the child. Consequently, parents push and are pushed toward the acceptance of the new condition without awareness that first the old conditions of existence must die and be experienced as lost through a process like that of grief. An example from life will help to illustrate.

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[2] Matheny, Mary Marguerite, "Antidote for Confusion," printed in *The Crippled Child*, August, 1957, pp. 181-2.

In an open-ended interview with Walter D. Matheny, Director of the Matheny School for Cerebral Palsied Children, and a parent of a cerebral palsied child the distinction of the awareness of the new situation and the passing away of the old was clearly brought to light. Part of the interview went this way:

> Do you remember what your thoughts were at the time when you first felt your son might be brain injured?
>
> Yes, vividly. My wife delivered Chuckie and it took the doctor a long, long time to get him breathing. I was in the Delivery Room. I saw Chuckie turn blue, then blackish. The doctor looked at me as if to give up, but I said, "Keep going, keep going!" Then, he cried. Chuckie cried! He was alive! Later that day, I was called back to the hospital because they were having difficulty keeping him alive. I sat on the edge of my wife's bed and we talked about how he might not live and how if he did live he would probably be a C.P. (cerebral palsied child).
>
> It's hard to say just exactly what was going on in my head. All the dreams I had dreamed for my son seemed shot to hell. You see, I'd played football, in college and in the service. Played all over the country. I think that if I'd have got the chance I'd just as soon have tossed a football into my son's crib as a teddy bear. But those dreams just hung there like black cloudy nightmares. We knew the score right from the first. Physical fitness was my field and training. My job at the time was to train flight crews for the Air Force. I knew what it

> meant when the brain went that long without oxygen. I couldn't fool myself on what that score was.
>
> So you accepted him right from birth, because you knew what had happened and what the outcome of that would be?
>
> No, I didn't. Not really. It wasn't until almost two years later that I really could say I accepted Chuck. For those two years, I was what you might call a successful failure. I was busy and confused.
>
> Then one night when I was home, Chuckie pushed his walker up beside my chair. We had made him a little homemade rig so he could get around, because he couldn't walk. And as I looked down at him that night, trying so hard to get near me, something happened. I suddenly realized that he was the one with the handicap—not me. I realized that I was feeling sorry for myself, because of all those dreams I had of what my son was to be. How he was going to be all the things that I was, and then some. And I realized how much those dreams still were a part of my life. But suddenly it dawned on me that kicking a football 60 yards wasn't the most important thing in life.
>
> That night I had a long talk with myself. I said, "look here, physical fitness is your *job*, and this is *your* son. So what if you have dreams about him that won't come true, just because he is not going to be exactly what you want doesn't mean that you can just walk out on him. You've got a job to do for your own son. So quit feeling sorry for yourself just because things didn't work out the way you had dreamed they would."[3]

Reviewing this very significant interview, we can pull out several important factors. First, the problem was not the lack of awareness of the handicap, for Matheny knew the score right from the first. Nor was the problem a lack of information about what could be helpful to the child's development, for as a Physical Fitness Consultant Matheny was about as much in the know as anyone at that time. The real problem was those "dreams" which went on living in spite of the fact that they would never come true. It was not until these dreams died that Matheny was able to really experience the new structures in his living.

However, let us not think that Matheny is unusual. All fathers have dreams for their children, if they have any feeling for them at all. In normal cases they are given 16 to 18 years to learn to live with what their son or daughter really is and to let go of what dreams they had. Even then in some normal unhandicapped cases, the death of those

[3] Matheny, Walter D., a personal interview held June 16, 1967.

dreams comes hard. Fathers who try to make their sons football heroes, lawyers, or doctors, ministers in spite of the son's feelings are not unheard of. However, at least there is time for the struggle to take place between the fathers' dreams and reality or the sons' feelings. In the case of handicapped children, those 16 to 18 years are telescoped to a very few years at most or perhaps, to a few minutes in some cases. It is a traumatic separation from what one has come to think of as a part of himself.

The traumatic separation from what has come to be thought of as a part of oneself is almost a classical definition of the situation occasioning grief. One writer, after surveying several decades of grief studies, summed it up this way, "Bereavement (or grief) comes from separation—separation which is felt as the loss of a part of oneself and is, therefore, a specific reaction to a traumatic human experience."[4] Thus, a more helpful perspective from which to view the problem of parental reactions to handicapped children is the perspective of grief or the process through which one passes after the experience of a traumatic separation of a part of oneself. Grief is customarily thought of as an emotion surrounding the time of death of a loved one. However, it need not be so limited in its scope. "Grief is the emotion that is involved in the work of mourning, whereby a person seeks to disengage himself from the demanding relationship that existed and to re-invest his emotional capital in new and productive directions for the health and welfare of his life in society."[5] Grief is the experience of amputated emotions when one's ongoing feelings are suddenly and radically altered, halted or severed.

However, as Jackson mentions, grief is a way of coping with this amputation in one's emotional life. Grief's goal is not simply to get one to "accept the inevitable" and obvious fact of death. Grief's aim is to make possible a new life and health for the individual and for his re-entry into society.

Thus, it would seem that the pattern of Matheny's two years as a "successful failure, busy but confused" fits this outline. He is not unique in what he felt, just in his ability to express his feelings. Even without the physical death, the conditions of amputated emotions are

[4] Gardner, Larry A., "The Ministry of the Pastor to the Bereaved" (Th.M. thesis, submitted to Princeton Theological Seminary, 1956).

[5] Jackson, Edgar N., *Understand Grief* (Abingdon Press, New York, 1958), p. 18.

present in the parents of a handicapped child. "All those dreams . . . shot to hell."

Further in a very real way, this is a death of a loved one. The noted specialist in the field of mental retardation, Abraham Levinson, observing the shock and reaction of parents has noted it this way, "I can understand the ordeal parents go through when they are told their child is mentally retarded, for I find it an ordeal also, just to break the tragic news to them. No matter how gently I try to explain the situation to them, I know it is *worse than a death knell* to many parents."[6]

However, even though many writers have mentioned grief, none have pursued the process of these reactions to observe what happens to these feelings. Perhaps there is good reason why they have not been pursued. It will be observed that most writers in the field of handicapped children are medical doctors. If we may speculate, perhaps, for them, grief is not a live option, but a dead-end street of frustration. We will in the next section turn to consider the process of grief as something more than a symbol of defeat in a moment.

Thus, it would appear that we have come upon a new perspective from which we may view the problem of parental reactions to their handicapped children. These reactions of "confusion, shock, guilt, bitterness, resentment and envy" (Levinson) and "stunned disbelief,"[7] which sap the energy are not just random reactions flying like sparks off a grinding wheel. Instead, these reactions are the pattern grief of a parent starting to feel for and to find himself in a situation of amputated emotions. As such they can be understood and used to help in the healing of the parent and the improvement of the relationship between parent and child.

However, first let us consolidate our new vantage point from which we view the problem of parental reactions to their handicapped children. What ground does "Grief" cover which the idea of "acceptance" did not? We found acceptance was unacceptable because of its shortsightedness as far as seeing clearly what the goal of the process was and its oversight of not spelling out how a person came to the point of acceptance. In the process of grief, there is a very definite goal. We have seen that the goal of grief is the withdrawal of the emotional energy invested in the deceased person or a collapsed dream and the reinvestment of that emotional energy in the on-going and outgoing business of the living. This is the very process which we drew out of the Matheny interview. There was a withdrawal of that emotional energy which he had invested in his dreams of what his son would be, "kicking a football 60 yards wasn't the most important thing in life." A withdrawal from past dreams and a reinvestment in realistic future orientation, that is the goal of grief. Whereas acceptance as a therapeutic process hopes to make a painful situation bearable by bringing it out into the open or into conscious reflection. Acceptance is primarily a stoical stance on salvation.

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[6] Levinson, Abraham, *The Mentally Retarded Child* (The John Day Co., New York, 1965), p. 26.

[7] Hattion, Daniel, *Understanding Cerebral Palsy* (Erie County Crippled Children's Society, Erie, Pa., 1967).

The new ground which can be viewed from the perspective of living grief is that of the withdrawal and the reinvestment. Acceptance, looking too much to the future tends to stress "reinvestment," at the expense of failing to consider seriously the past feeling which blocks that transaction of emotional capital. What we have seen is that there is a whole range of reactions which must be dealt with before there can be a coming to grips with the present situation. First, there must be a "letting go" or a "letting die" of the dreams, the emotions and the expectations which have been amputated by the traumatic discovery of a child's severe limitations. First, the withdrawal, *then* the reinvestment or the parent will find himself emotionally overdrawn, go as Matheny put it, "busy but confused." Virginia Kreyer led right up to the new perspective on ministry to the handicapped parent as early as 1956. She wrote:

> Every couple who knows that they are soon to be parents look forward to the day of their child's birth with joy and expectancy. They look forward to bringing up a child who will be healthy and happy, who will enter school at the age of 6 and from then on will share increasingly in the little as well as the big joys of life. And yet, it has been estimated that there are some 55,000 cerebral palsied people living in the United States today, and statistics show that each year there are seven cerebral palsied children born for every 100,000 of our population. When such a child is born the parents are faced with a problem, a great problem which must be met, grim as it may be.[8]

What she fails to take into account is what counselors of parents have failed too often to take into account, what happens to the amputated emotions? The problem is not simply a matter of grim endurance and a test of one's emotional ability to grit his teeth. It is a matter of one's ability to handle grief and work with it and through it.

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[8] Kreyer, Virginia, "The Ministry and the Handicapped," *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 7, May 1956, p. 45.

C. A SLANT ON THE SOLUTION

We have said before that grief is not a dead-end street of frustration, but a way by which one may get back into the flow of life again after having been cut off. Indeed, one of the earliest systematic students of the process of grief outlined it as a step-by-step procession making it possible for the grief-stricken person to become free from the "bondage to the deceased."[9] A later writer on the subject of the function of grief has defined grief as meaning the attempt "to work through memories of the deceased, to review them, to relive them and gradually to loosen the tentacles of affections."[10]

There is a generally observed combination of prominent reactions in the normal workings of the grief process. Whether these follow one another in a regular step-by-step fashion, or occur in a non-linear pattern is not yet known. But they do seem to be progressive stages on which the action of withdrawal and reinvestment is played out. It is through these actions on the successive stages that the "tentacles" of the past are removed so that there can be a re-entry into a new relationship.

In order to grasp the dynamics of the process, we shall look at these stages of grief, both as they have been seen in grief for the death and how they may appear in living grief. We shall look at the stages of successive experiences and the function of those experiences in the total process of withdrawal and reinvestment. We shall also examine some critical differences between the two types of grief.

The first stage of grief is shock and disbelief. The person is in a sense temporarily anesthetized. It is almost as if the mind is blacked out by an overloaded circuit. Everything seems unreal, dream-like, or nightmarish. The reality of the situation is not crushing, because it is not experienced. The state of shock is in many ways beneficial, for it prevents the person from being overwhelmed by the magnitude of his loss. In the case of death, the state of unreality is not likely to last, because custom and the corpse re-inforce the facts of death. However, in the case of grief over handicapped children, the danger of this stage

[9] Lindemann, Erich, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," *Journal of Pastoral Care*, Vol. 5, Fall, 1951.

[10] Rogers, William F., "The Needs of the Bereaved," *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 1, June, 1950, p. 17.

is the obvious danger of continued disbelief and a total unwillingness to even recognize the facts of the child's handicap. Whereas the person involved with grief for the dead, will idealize the image of the deceased, the person who is entering living grief will idealize the good points of the child, e.g. his areas of ability, his recent achievements, his progress, reasons for his slowness, etc. Abraham Levinson notes the paradox in the case of parents by saying, "Over and over again I have encountered that paradoxical reaction among parents. On the one hand there is the refusal to accept the doctor's verdict and on the other, there is the realization that there is something wrong."[11] Again, acceptance would insist that the parents look at the present situation consciously. However, as a process of "living grief" we see this as a part of the total picture. This is the prior expectations dictating what is expected now. The function of this stage of grief is to allow the person a brief time in which to organize his attack on the problem. To force a parent to submit to reality may have the effect of destroying a relationship between the minister and the parent, or the physician and the parent. However, there must be a patient, persistent effort to bring the parent to the reality of the situation. The danger of this stage in both cases is the denial of the reality may extend beyond the immediate crisis.

The second stage of grief is emotional release of negativity. When the dreadfulness of the person's loss begins to dawn on him he may have to give vent to his feelings. In the case of death, this may be through criticism of the doctor, or of the funeral, or it may be a fist shaken in the face of God for his cruelty. Perhaps, even an anger toward the deceased for his death. In many cases, the minister is the focus of the feelings toward God. In any case, it is a displaced feeling, "a senseless striking back to get rid of the feeling." In the face of helplessness, the only release is to strike out. Buchman says of this anger, "It is usually a senseless striking back to get rid of the feeling. It is a displaced feeling and is usually meant for the deceased."[12]

The function of this stage of grief seems to be to make one aware of the loss he has suffered and his helplessness in the face of it. It causes one to feel the tightness of the "tentacles of affection," and begins the process of doing something to release oneself from those tentacles. The anger may be saying in effect, "Why did I ever get involved with you? Why did I come to depend on you? See what you have done to me? See how you have hurt me?" It may be the first step which says, "Well, if you are going to pull out on me, I will do the same." Thus begins the withdrawal.

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[11] Levinson, Abraham, *The Mentally Retarded Child*, p. 28.

[12] Buchman, C. Charles, *Ministering to the Grief-Sufferer* (Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1964), p. 20.

The danger is in denial of the anger as a feeling. Anger in the face of grief seems to upset people at the funeral, but it is even more upsetting when it is viewed in a situation of living grief. Parents often punish each other and themselves. "How could you even think such a thing?" So the anger which is toward the child (even though he is innocent and blameless) is turned inward with its usual ruinous effect, or deflected with its target becoming some institution, or agency, or policy, or professional who is there in a helping capacity. If the anger can be understood as a natural reaction to hurt then it can be dealt with creatively and becoming a tool to pry loose the tentacles of the old dream. This discovery and use of anger to pry off the old dream is what appears to be the meaning of Matheny's statement, "I went out and had a talk with myself."

When the person's anger has been spent and found to have brought nothing real in the way of change, then he may enter into another stage of grief, the sense of loneliness, isolation and perhaps, depression. The person, brought face to face with the finality that there is no way to change what has happened, feels all alone against the odds. Erich Moss has described this stage of grief most extensively in a case study of a woman named Jane. He says:

> Jane had lived with her husband for over twenty years in rare harmony and mutual belonging. When he died, she felt as if it was her own death. After the funeral she refused to see anybody, locked herself in her room and lay down on her bed. She felt the cold numbness of death rising up from her legs, and for days she continued to lie there, sleepless and trembling, on the bed where now she was suddenly alone and petrified.[13]

This, of course, was an extreme case, but it serves to point up the more normal reaction. The rock bottom is reached when the full weight of the tragedy is felt and the rug has been completely pulled out from beneath one. He is in the pit of despair, locking himself off from significant others, making his aloneness greater loneliness by refusing to permit interaction.

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[13] Moss, Erich, *The Conquest of Loneliness* (Random House, New York, 1957), p. 214.

In the case of death, the descent into despair will most likely be abrupt, unless there has been much advanced warning. However, in the case of grief for the living, the descent may be so gradual that no one notices the person descending. There is just a gradual increase of the distance between the living griever and significant people. Levinson has again observed what may be useful to us. In observing how the tragedy causes parents to pull away from each other, he notes "parents frequently blame each other . . . disagree on what should be done . . . the tragedy that should bring parents closer often ends up in quarrels, separation, and even in divorce and breaking up of families."[14] That is the way in which parents sometimes lock each other out. Or perhaps, they just become overactive as a way of avoiding, "busy but confused." Like Jane in her room, parents sometimes lock themselves off from other people by throwing the bolts of bitterness, resentment, and envy to bar anyone from entering.

No one seems to know quite what function this depression and isolation plays in the therapy of grief. Whereas, with the first two examples and most of the following, there seemed to be a "reason" or a "rightness" about what was happening, that does not seem to be the case here. Perhaps this is a need for one to be alone in order to motivate the work of working one's way back. Or perhaps, this is simply a regressive form of behavior to see if others will reach out for one.

Its function may be obscure, but its danger is obvious. The grieving person, especially the living-griever may permanently damage the ties that bind him to other significant people whom he will need if he is to recover from the blow that has befallen him. For the living-griever to isolate himself from his wife by blame, depression, etc. may be the gravest danger in the whole process of handling his situation. For if the damage done is permanently fixed, such as in separation or divorce, the whole therapy of grief is endangered. For without someone with whom to work through his grief the struggle becomes more difficult.

Assuming that one reaches the rock bottom of the pit of depression without completely falling out of the world of reality, the way up is often by working through the feelings of guilt. It is a common reaction in death for the survivors to ask themselves if they had done all they could have done. Frequently, they castigate themselves for not having called the doctor sooner. Guilt may also be brought on by the remembrance of disagreements that were not resolved, by promises that were not kept, by altercations that were not mended before time ran out. In objective reality, one may realize that these were part of the normal give and take of living with someone. However, to the griever they appear to be much more. Often they may be seen as contributing to the death. Edgar Jackson records such in his study of a normal grief. Speaking of a woman whose husband died, following surgery for a heart ailment he says:

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[14] Levinson, Abraham, *The Mentally Retarded Child,* p. 29.

> Two days later (after the funeral) when the pastor called at the home she (the widow) became quite confidential and explained in detail about a disagreement they had had years ago as to the best way to provide for his aged mother. She said it was the only real disagreement they had ever had. As she told about it she wept and asked if the pastor thought her husband might have lived longer if they had not had that disagreement.[15]

In objective eyes, there could be little connection, but counselors to those in grief soon discover that objective absolution does not particularly matter. Generally the person will search for something about which to question himself. It may have a very real connection, or a more remote relation, or an almost absurd bearing, but the griever will usually find something.

The same holds true for the bearers of living grief. The guilt may center around the fact that the child was not wanted. It may be seen as a form of punishment for disobedience to "God's will." Perhaps, the feeling of guilt may focus on some specific act. "If only I hadn't moved the furniture when I was expecting." Or, "if only I had watched my diet more carefully." The reasons for which one can feel guilty are multitude. However, basically the reasons for feeling guilty boil down to one common theme: if only my life were different this would not have happened.

In the normal resolution of grief, wherein the bondage to the deceased is released, guilt may well function as the turning point. We have seen that people will generally search for something about which to feel guilty, no matter how remotely related. But any one who has tried to talk people out of their guilt by passing over it as not related, knows that to be a futile effort. It would thus, seem that the guilt is performing a function and until that function is completed there can be no "dropping of the charges" one has brought against himself.

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[15] Jackson, Edgar N., *Understand Grief*, p. 134.

The functions of these periods of guilt in grief reactions, may be two. First, they are to give a person 'his day in court' so to speak. That is to give him a chance to examine the evidence, all the evidence no matter how trivial it seems to be. If no cause for guilt is found *after the evidence is in,* then one is free to remove the bonds that tie him to the deceased. If, however, as is more usually the case, one discovers that there are "reasons" for feeling responsible, then, so the grief-stricken person usually thinks, action must be taken to change one's life, before the bondage to the deceased can be terminated. Again Edgar Jackson provides us the prime material of an example. It is the simple example of a boy, who told his puppy to wait outside while he visited a friend.

> After a few minutes, the puppy was tired of waiting and started for home, only to be killed by a car. Bill was filled with feelings of guilt mixed with his sorrow. He said, 'I was always so careful with Spot. Why did he get killed the one time I was not careful?' He blamed himself. He would not have another puppy because that would be an act of unfaithfulness. After a time, he said that Spot had taught him a great deal about life by his death and that Spot would always be a part of him as far as his education was concerned. He learned the price of carelessness and also something of the obligations of love. His guilt was real and it was resolved only by certain mental processes that made the loss seem justified.[16]

A change in one's life in response to the "guilt" of which one has found himself guilty. That is the usual way in which this stage of grief is resolved. Simply glossing over the guilt-feeling, real or not, accomplishes nothing, and fails to recognize that a person is not trying to get people to forget what has happened, and what he feels he has done. What the guilt-ridden grief-stricken person is seeking is forgiveness, which entails repentance, reformation, or re-direction of his life. Bill could not simply forget what had happened, but he did gain a degree of forgiveness (i.e. sense of release) from the thought that the death of Spot was "a part of him as far as his education was concerned."

The working through of guilt feelings is the turning point in the therapy of grief in that this period of self-evaluation and evaluation of the relationship provides the basis upon which the "re-investment" of the emotional capital is made. If the grief is to be a helpful experience, the guilt is handled in such a way that the experience becomes a "part of one's education."

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

On the other hand, the danger, which is great, is that the guilt will result in such a costly "reinvestment" that one is losing out day by day as a result of his attempt to find forgiveness. Such instances of guilt, that is costly in the way of re-investment, are evident to most pastors in relation to the grief for the dead. Costly funerals that can ill be afforded, homes kept methodically unaltered, attempts to assume the role of the deceased, or to become like them in personality, these and many other instances may be all part of the "unprofitable" bargain one strikes with his guilt feeling for the deceased.

However, we need to be just as aware of the danger of "unprofitable" bargains struck with unresolved guilt feelings on the matter of living grief for a handicapped child. Here a case illustration may help to demonstrate how dangerously guilt may work in cases of living grief. The story of Jane Smith (a woman, whose identity we shall conceal behind the name) was told to me by her daughter. Jane was the wife of a well-to-do corporation lawyer whose success had brought the family into prominent position in the suburban community where they lived. Upon becoming pregnant with her first child, she discovered that her blood type was Rh-negative. However, this was felt to be no problem, because in an army test, her husband had also been found Rh-negative. The tragedy of the case is that there was some mix-up in the husband's typing. The mistake was not discovered until after it was too late. The birth of the first two children went smoothly and they are healthy, normal individuals. However, the third child, a boy was born cerebral palsied.

The daughter of Jane Smith, in a series of conversations, related how the mother blamed herself for not having insisted on blood tests. She began to become despondent. Then it seemed as if she made a bargain, a pact, an agreement with herself. She would see to it that "Danny" (as we shall call her son) would not suffer for her mistake. Jane devoted her life to him. Days were spent in an unending effort to bring him to wholeness. The inevitable round of doctors, hospitals, treatment centers, therapists, and teachers was made. Every round of doctors, however, only led to another round of other doctors. Every refusal on the part of the child's handicap to respond to treatment resulted in Jane's blaming herself and further guilt. Every new discovery started the whole process in motion again.

On the surface Jane looked like a devoted mother, but inside it was guilt that drove her, not devotion. It was as if she had made a pact with herself that she could not be free, until her son was made whole. Of course, there was no way for Danny to become or be made whole again. While he made great strides forward, these were not enough to appease Jane's guilt. Strides forward only served to drive Jane on in her bargain with her guilt. She would seek no other way of handling these feelings. In short, it was health for Danny or "hell to pay." One day just that cost was extracted.

As the years passed, the struggle against the insurmountable odds began to tell on Jane. Gradually, as it became clear that she could not win the bargain, Jane began to try to lose her guilt in alcohol. The ensuing alcoholism resulted in Jane's death (sclerosis of the liver) as Danny neared his 19th year.

The community, the neighbors, the friends, of course applauded her heroic efforts. Few raised question as to the motivation behind her devotion which she gave so unstintingly. Without detracting from what Jane did for Danny, however, we must ask if she was not just another sacrificial offering consumed upon the altar of guilt. Let us be clear in what we are saying. The damage was not done by her efforts to help. It was not a case of sheer exhaustion that got Jane down. Instead, it was her unanalyzed lack of "understanding" of *why she had to do* what she did for Danny, which in turn led her to set unanalyzable, unchallengeable, unchangeable goals which were totally unrealistic and unattainable. To put it in theological terminology, Jane set out to do penance for her guilt, but the penance which she required herself to pay was unpayable. Therefore, in her mind her guilt was unpardonable. She lived with that guilt until it became an impossible burden. Perhaps, if someone significant (i.e. someone not easily rejected) had not simply accepted her efforts and applauded her determination, but had instead attempted to help her see through them to the core of her guilt that drove her, things may have been different.

A dramatic breakthrough for one woman, sacrificing herself on the altar of guilt, happened just that way. It was in the office of a counsellor at a school for the handicapped. In the process of having her child admitted to his school, the woman was asked if she knew what may have caused or contributed to the child's brain injury.

> "Yes, I know what caused it," she replied, "I did."
>
> "You did?" he responded, and being sensitive to the needs and feelings of parents of handicapped children, he went on to say, "you say that as if you are pretty certain about it. There are a lot of things that can cause C.P. you know."
>
> "Yes, but I know what happened," said the woman, "I know I caused it."
>
> "May I ask how?"
>
> "I didn't want to have the child."
>
> "But simply not wanting to have the child wouldn't have caused it."
>
> "Oh, but I did more than just wish about it. One day, when I was just overwrought with the idea of having another child, I stood at the top of the landing and jumped from the top of the stairs to the bottom."
>
> "You wanted to cause a miscarriage?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> "Did anything happen?"
>
> "No nothing happened that day, but my child is here because of what I did that day."
>
> "You feel you are to blame?"
>
> "Certainly," said the woman.

The woman went on to tell him all that she had done to get rid of the guilt feeling, to try to make amends, to try to make it up to the child. She had not let a single desire of hers come before her child's demands. She had practically devoted her life and life savings to the child. And she ended, "I have not slept with my husband since the child was born."

Realizing the damage that was being done to the woman, her marriage, and to the handicapped child, the counsellor spent some time counselling with the woman. Nothing seemed to move her an inch from her position; she was guilty and she had to pay. Finally, in a desperation attempt, he conceived a plan to demonstrate to the woman that she could not have damaged the child by her actions.

> "Look," he said to her at their last meeting before she left the child at school and departed for home, "I can prove to you that what you did was not what caused your child's C.P."
>
> "You can. How?"

> "Oh no, not until you have done something for me. Next time you come to visit your child (they had come some distance) both you and your husband come. Then, I want you to get a motel near by and plan to stay overnight—one room, one double bed. When you bring me the reservation I'll prove to you that what you did could not have caused your child's damage."

She left his office puzzled, doubtful, but willing to try anything. In a few weeks, she and her husband were back to visit with their child and they had made the motel arrangements.

The demonstration which the counsellor had planned went this way. He took a plastic bag. "This is you," he said, "Inside when you were pregnant that was a water sac all filled as full as possible with water." Here he filled the bag with as much water as it would hold. "And this is the fetus of your child," he continued, dropping a whole uncooked egg into the water in the plastic bag. Then he heat sealed the bag. "O.K. now we have you, the water bag inside you, the fetus, and inside the egg is the yoke, which is your child's brain." He handed the bag to her. "Drop it on the floor." She hesitated. "Go ahead drop it, you've nothing to lose." She dropped it on the floor. Nothing happened, the egg remained uncracked. "Throw it against the wall." She did it hesitantly. "Here, throw it harder," he said, as he handed the plastic bag back to her. She threw it much harder. Still upon looking the egg shell had not cracked. "All right now let's look at the inside of that egg, just to see how much damage you did to your child's brain." He cracked the egg onto a saucer—the yoke was whole. "Now what do you say?"

The woman looked for sometime in silence at the egg yoke in the saucer, and then in a triumphal whisper said, "It didn't break, I couldn't break it." From that point on there began to take place a re-evaluation of her feelings toward all concerned and a re-structuring of a new and more healthy relationship.

Of course, it would be an oversimplification to say that the guilt vanished with the demonstration. Nevertheless, this case illustration serves to point up the fact that if sacrifice on the altar of guilt that parents of handicapped children make is not simply accepted and applauded, there is the possibility of a breakthrough instead of a breakdown.

The dramatic story of this breakthrough is not the usual case. Far more common is the tragic story of Jane, of those who are consumed by guilt's demands for a total sacrifice, if not of their health then often of their homes. Guilt plays a major role in most, if not all, living grief work. Perhaps, I would even say that all parents in one way or another blame themselves for what happened. Of course, that is an indefensible statement, but when one has talked with parents of handicapped long enough to gain a confidence which is not readily given to a "non-handicapped parent" usually the subject is raised. Sources of guilt vary. Perhaps it was "a trip to visit my mother, who was dying, which I knew should not have been made at my stage of pregnancy." Maybe the reason for blame is an "iron deficiency of which I should have been aware enough to tell the doctor." Another set of parents may tell you "if only we had gotten him to the hospital sooner they might have been able to do something about his meningitis." Of course, they realize how difficult it is even for a physician to diagnose meningitis in the critical first hour, but nevertheless, the guilt remains.

The crucial difference is not the presence or absence of guilt or guilt feelings on the part of the parents. What makes the difference is the bargain struck between the parent and his guilt. What must the person do to feel free, to feel forgiven? That is the crucial question for the handling of living grief. Has the person in effect assigned himself to a life of hard, menial self-destructiveness in order to gain the forgiveness for his guilt? Has he, like the convict of some penal systems, been reduced to less than a whole person by the sentence he has passed upon himself or herself?

Another example, closely paralleling Jane's may serve to point out the difference between salvation and slavery in working through the guilt of living grief. Beth, as we shall call this woman, is actively involved in the Retarded Children's Association and several committees and volunteer programs to help the handicapped child. She became involved as a result of having a retarded child and has found in these outlets a way of handling her guilt. She related it this way to me in a conversation we had while working on a Sheltered Worship Project.

> ". . . when I was about six months pregnant with Jill, my husband's mother became very ill. So being a nurse, I went to take care of her. I am sure that the stress and strain of that time had some bearing. After she was born and the truth began to hit home to me, there were times when I think I actually wished for her sake that she

> would die. Then when it became apparent that she was going to live, Nick and I had a long talk, several in fact. At first, we talked about doing everything for her. Then we began to realize that we could never change Jill into a 'normal' child. So we felt that the thing we could do was to make room in this world for children who were different. It has been hard. There have been times when I felt tied down. But honestly, Rev. Cotter, the work of making room in the world for Jill and all the children like her has made my life much more rewarding than it would have otherwise been."

The guilt feelings may serve as the turning point of the dynamic release in the midst of bondage. In working through to a meaningful bargain one may reach a valuable way in which to "reinvest" the emotional capital of all those dreams.

The final, lasting, and most healthy stage of living grief is the same as that of grief at death. In this stage, or perhaps state, a person becomes, paradoxically, his "old-new" self again or perhaps it is his "new-old" self for the first time. We are never the same old self we once were when we have confronted and experienced such a great and shaking experience as grief. However, at last if the process of grief is worked through we come to adjust ourselves to reality as we once did. We are different in the way we are ourself. The nature of that difference, whether it is stronger or weaker, deeper or shallower, more sensitive or more hardened, depends on how it went on the various steps on our walk through the "valley of the shadow of death."

To summarize what we have said in this section on a slant on the solution let us remember how we began. The initial statement was that grief is not a dead-end street of frustration, but a way to get back into the flow of life again. We have seen how the process of grief through successive steps frees one of the "tentacles of affection for the deceased." Then, to change the analogy, the person is free to withdraw the emotional capital in the ongoing life around him. In the case of living grief, the tentacle which ties a parent to a handicapped child are most often the "Dreams" the parent held for what the child would become. Without the removal of these tentacles the parent cannot possibly accept the child as he is. Further, we saw the important role that guilt plays. Guilt is the motivational force behind the "bargains" the parents make when they "reinvest." Guilt, or rather, the sentence the parents pronounce on themselves determines the possibility of salvation or the perishing in slavery.

Thus, from this new perspective of looking at the problem of the parent of a handicapped child, we have gained much insight. We have taken a step toward understanding the dynamics of the process that could not be taken by the tired and overworked concept of acceptance. It is grief that the parents experience, grief, not just in the sense of sadness, but in the sense of having to make an emotional withdrawal and reinvestment. When physicians, counsellors, pastors, physical therapists, and other professional workers tell the parents that, "You must accept your child, as he is," it is to this process of grief that they are alluding.

II. SUSTAINING

We turn now to consider the second major objective of this paper: "to discover a way of helping by a ministry of sustaining." Perhaps, that sounds a little presumptive to say *a priori* that it is the ministry of sustaining which shall be found most effective in ministering to the living griever. However, in the light of our new understanding, it will soon become clear why a sustaining perspective is most helpful. In this section, we shall attempt to come to grips with what it means to "sustain" as contrasted to comforting, supporting, consoling, etc. We shall seek to disclose why sustaining is an effective perspective from which to minister to living grievers, whereas, these other types (comforting, etc.) may not be helpful, but harmful in the long haul. It is the hope and the aim of this section to give the minister, who is involved with those parents of handicapped children, an alternate route to help parents detour around the roadway of happiness and wholeness that has been blocked.

A. SUSTAINING IS/IS NOT

Sustaining is a concept advanced by Seward Hiltner[17] as one of the three legs on the tripod with which one can get a panoramic picture of the ministry vis-à-vis individuals. The other two legs of the tripod are healing and guiding. The emphasis of the sustaining aspect of ministry is on "standing by" in situations that are essentially unchangeable, or are incapable of restoration to a *status quo ante*, or are going to take a lengthy period of time to bring about change. To anyone familiar with the problems of handicapped children it should be obvious that these are precisely the conditions in which their parents find themselves—unchangeable, imperfectible, or almost unendurable.

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[17] Hiltner, Seward, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, p. 116.

Thus, to put it in a word, sustaining appears precisely the style of ministry intended for helping in "helpless" situations.

The key to a ministry of sustaining in any situation where healing is prevented is found in the word "transcends." In situations where a roadblock has fallen obstructing the path of life's progress even though that roadblock may be immovable, perhaps even immutable, sustaining finds a way over or around it—through sustaining the person transcends the block. Now the word "transcends" is a transparent word. What we mean by transcending the arrest must be seen in different situations and in some instances, perhaps, even in specific cases. For Walter Matheny to transcend the roadblock on the path of life meant to become more involved in the handicap of his son. However, for Jane Smith, if it had happened, transcending the arrest would have meant becoming less involved in her son's life and being able to identify herself with something or someone less than perfect. Only the process of sustaining, in which there is the paradoxical dual emphasis on being neither deflected from the unwholeness of a person, nor disgruntled when efforts to achieve wholeness are stymied, is wide enough to reach people at both extremes. In a moment, we shall move on to see what "transcending," the key word in sustaining, means in cases of living grief, and how specifically a minister can be of help. However, first let us discover more what sustaining is by seeing what it is not.

Sustaining is not comforting, consoling, or supporting, although all of these may play a role in the process of bringing hope into a hopeless situation. The difference between sustaining and the others is that these others make the hopeless situation even more hopeless. The reason is that those who aim to give comfort and consolation often communicate a feeling that the situation has stagnated in the status quo. Further, those who seek to give only support sometimes end up being less than helpful in a helpless situation because they communicate to the person that he is viewed as inadequate to deal with the situation.

The author of the idea of sustaining eschews the connotation and effects of comforting, consoling, and support with a passion almost poetic. He says:

> When the sky is so black, one is tempted to paint a silver lining or two, evanescent as he may know the paint to be. But the results are disastrous. Not clouds, but only pictures of clouds will take paint.

> And by the act of painting one is testifying to his own feeling of hopelessness, precisely when his underlying and deep confidence can best be expressed through the renunciation of fantasy.[18]

If we set out to comfort by lining a cloud or two with silver and end up only making the black blacker by contrast, we have helped little. Once a newly ordained minister whose son suffered a brain injury was told, "It is an awful thing that has happened, but I am sure it will make you a better and more sensitive minister." Perhaps, the silver lining was on the cloud, perhaps, the man will be a better minister for the added sensitivity to the feelings of those who suffer similar mishaps. However, the comfort did bring more hurt than help, for at that moment the newly ordained minister felt like shouting, "To hell with God, if for me to be a better minister this must happen to my son, I'd rather go mine coal in West Virginia or sweep streets in Harlem." Further, if we set out to console the parent and try to make him feel better by telling him all the "wonderful" things handicapped children can do, and end up making him feel, through our consoling, that he has won a "consolation prize!" we have helped little and hurt deeply.

The basic difference between sustaining and supporting lies where the strength and resources to be tapped are thought to reside. When one seeks to be "supportive" he assumes that it is his strength that will carry the load. In truth, however, no one can bear the burden for the parent, no matter how much "his heart goes out" or how strong he is. Therefore, the only way the burden of suffering can be made more tolerable is through the strengthening of the sufferer, and that not by supporting him, but through sustaining which aims at aiding the suffering in drawing on his own resources and strengths.

We now move on to examine in more detail the key idea in sustaining. Let us attempt to see more closely and more clearly precisely what we mean by "transcending the arrest" when that which has brought life to a standstill is the retarded or crippled development of one's handicapped offspring. It is now that the ideas we discovered and developed in the previous section on "Understanding" become most helpful. The road, to be more accurate, perhaps, we should call it "the detour" of grief is the way in which one gets around, or over, or beyond the roadblock of having a handicapped child whose life is permanently torn up, "under construction" and never completed. In the previous section, we mapped out in some detail the route which grief most frequently follows, it will not be necessary to repeat that here.

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

However, if we carry further, our analogue of the detour of grief as the way in which the roadblock of a child handicapped is transcended, we shall discover how the two functions of a detour are the two factors which bring (a) hope to a hopeless situation, and (b) help to a helpless one. First, the detour of grief allows the parents to once again move on their way. Countless parents have permanently arrested their life because they refused to go any other way, except the straight ahead main route insisting that until this handicapped child's life has been completely smoothed out, they will not have another child, or enjoy a moment's leisure, or take a vacation, etc. The detour of grief for the living allows for times that happen when there is an impasse on the way life normally travels. In words we have used before, the old dreams die, and "kicking a football sixty yards is (found) not (to be) the most important thing in life." But until and unless there seems to be another way of moving ahead these long cherished dreams will not die. The detour of grief for the living opens such a way, even though it may not be as straight, nor as smooth, nor as safe a route as the highway of having a healthy, normal child. Thus, by opening up a way around the impasse the process of living grief provides hope in a situation which is hopelessly torn up and likely to remain so for some time to come.

Secondly, the detour of living grief performs a service for the benefit of the child. The second function has to do with keeping the feelings of the parents from getting in the way of the process of therapy. It is sometimes noted by therapists and physicians alike that the parents present as much of a problem as the child. That is, their emotions and feelings get so involved and mixed up that they hamper the handicapped child's development even more. If, for example, a mother is constantly weeping over "what her child might have been," that can not help but affect the child's image of himself. Or if a father refuses to recognize the retardedness of his son and the need for special treatment, the outcome is surely less hopeful. Through the process of living grief the old idea of "what the child might have been" is allowed to die. The feelings of grief are then worked through to the point of the formation of a new relationship with the child as he is, not as dreams and desire would like to have him. With these new feelings come a new grounding in the reality of the situation, and the needs of the child.

Now the function of the pastor exercising a ministry from the point of sustaining becomes clearer. He is not there simply to comfort the parents as they sit at the roadblock waiting for some miracle to come along. The role of the pastor is to be a patient, but persistent travelling companion with the parents. He cannot make the trip for them, regardless of how much he would like to say, "I know what you are going through." Such a statement is not true, he does not know it all. He cannot be a "back seat driver" telling them where they must turn, what comes next, and what they are doing wrong. Instead, the pastor's task is to be as observant and as reflective as possible of the feelings which the parents are expressing. In other words he must help them to see "where they actually are" on the road of grief. This is to be done not in some abstract, generalized, theoretical way, but through sensitive use of their own words, thoughts and feelings. In helping them classify the situation and feelings they are experiencing, the pastor helps them gather their own strengths together for the next step.

One stage of the process of living grief deserves special comment from the point of helping the pastor see himself in the relationship to the parents, that is the first stage of grief. As the pastor encounters a situation involving a handicapped child, his first task is to help the parents face the facts, even though those facts deal a crippling blow to them. However, let any pastor approach this delicate situation with all fear and trembling. It is difficult enough to have to break the sad news of death to someone. They will not really believe the death until they have seen the proof. It is even more difficult to "break the news" when there is so much evidence to the contrary. And it will be amazing to anyone not intimately connected with a handicapped child how great the mind's capacity is at "overlooking" some things and overvaluing others. "Johnny is not retarded, he just talks different." The pastor will be amazed, but he must be patiently persistent, not drivingly demanding that the parents see the handicap at his speed. However, he must always be aware of any hint they may give that they too wonder about the child. Then he must reflect that too, with care, to make it clear that he understands what they are thinking. Sooner, or more likely, later, they will trust him and themselves enough to begin the process of living grief.

After the process has started, the task of the sustaining pastor is much the same as in other cases of grief. The primary difference occurs in the ups and downs of the child. There will be periods when he is making such rapid progress that the parents will be ready to call the whole thing off as far as working through the grief goes. Then, they will experience moments of severe setback, when the grief may almost seem to be set back to the beginning again. It would be as if a person near death rallied and slipped back several times. The emotions are torn between hope for recovery and the grief process. Therefore, it is wise for the pastor not to become *too* overly optimistic at the miraculous progress, nor to despair when the grief is not always progressing forward. Rather let him stand by hope's heights as well as despair's depths with a certain stability and concern.

III. SALVATION

We turn now to the third and final objective of this paper, to discover or reinterpret the meaning of salvation in light of our findings. From the beginning of this paper we have been "flirting" with a theological conception of salvation. Somewhat tenuously at the very first we said that we must take seriously the idea that God intends to meet men with salvation in every experience of life. It is time now that we stop flirting with the idea of salvation, become serious about it, and come to take a long steady look at just what we mean by salvation. Is it "pie in the sky by and by" in which the parents who have had this added burden on earth will have added glory above? Or is salvation an experience that can be comprehended in the midst of this life?

Salvation as a theological concept has had a long history of use. There have been times, and there are still moments when salvation is used, or abused, more as a club to beat people into "obedience" than anything else. Such pulpiteering often plays hard on the emotions of people to get an admission of submission which is supposed to be the ticket to the kingdom. This is not what salvation in intended to mean as we use it here. These experiences of hardship and heartache which parents of a handicapped child go through, are not designed by God to force the rebellious sinner into submission. The manipulation of a person to gain an admission of submission is not the path of salvation we intend to take here. Nor is the manipulation into submission the meaning originally intended by the word salvation. It is worth while to consider the historical meaning of the word, for through the consideration we shall come to a better understanding of what is meant when God meets us with salvation. Further, with this knowledge we shall better understand what is happening in the process of living grief.

In point of fact the ancient Hebrew word for salvation means just the opposite of being forced, or fooled into submission. The experience of salvation was that of "deliverance." It becomes clear that the experience of salvation is not being forced or fooled into submission, but it is being freed from the bonds which hold one back or bind one to a life of slavery.

The one great historical event which seems to have shaped much of Hebrew thought in connection with salvation is the Exodus. The liberation from the bondage to the foreign oppression of the Egyptians became a paradigm of what salvation was in Old Testament thought. While the Hebrew version of salvation is far more life-giving than the saw-dust perversion, still we must look deeper into the experience to discover the essence of it. We must ask what the deliverance from the oppression gained for the Hebrews? What did they get out of getting out of Egypt? The Exodus deliverance out of the "Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage" did not free the people of Israel from the toil and turmoil of life. Even the discovery of the "Land flowing with milk and honey" did not seem to end the toil and turmoil. For even in the "Promised Land" the cows still had to be milked every day and the bees still stung. However, what the Hebrews gained was the deliverance from the bondage to a regime that made life meaningless. Now, of course, meaninglessness is a modern word and thought. Moses never mentioned meaninglessness by name when he spoke to the Israelites. However, he did talk about "establishing a Covenant" and of being "God's people". (Exodus 6) He talked about having a sense of belonging to someone. He promised they would find a place to call their own. He mentioned the fulfillment of the promise made to the people that they would be somebody, namely the sons of Abraham. While not mentioning meaningfulness by name he used many of the elements which make up the concept of meaningfulness —identity, belonging, territory, and heritage. Further, Moses talked about having someone who listened. "I have heard the groanings of my people," were his words for what God had said. Moses also talked of a God who cared enough to get involved with them and work for their freedom. "I will deliver you from their bondage." Both having someone who listens and someone who cares enough to get involved in the important facets of your life are part of meaningfulness in life. Finally, Exodus refers to being delivered from the burden of monotonous labor in the mud, making brick with or without straw (i.e. with or without the possibility of success). Deliverance from that can surely be seen as deliverance from meaninglessness. Therefore, even if the Israelites did not escape from toil and turmoil, they escaped from tedium which is the worst of the three alternatives.

Thus, if this analysis is correct, the essence of the experience of salvation is the deliverance from submission to forces which make life meaningless. In the Old Testament writings these forces which made life meaningless were identified as external oppressors. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, The Assyrians, and later the Romans were singled out as forces which made life a farce. The rule they imposed mocked any true meaningfulness by binding the people to forced labor, by taking away their freedom, by denying their identity. Consequently, as a result of the nature of the oppressive forces always being foreign interventionists, salvation came to be identified almost wholly with the removal from the circumstances or the removal of the circumstances. This analysis of salvation, as the deliverance from forces which threaten to make life meaningless puts us on a helpful road as far as seeing salvation in the various situations of our own life.

However, we must go further, or perhaps more accurately we must come nearer home. What if the forces which mock life's meaning are not external but internal? For example, what if the forces which cause the loss of one's identity are the inner sense of inferiority and inadequacy which possesses a person? Is simple escape possible? Or what if the force which reduces life to a meaningless monotony of compulsively fraught acts is an inner sense of guilt? Surely there can be no salvation by simply running away and putting distance between the person and the threat. He could not escape from himself no matter how long or far he ran. Therefore, a different view of the mode and means of salvation is necessary.

The salvation from internal forces of oppression is the theme of the New Testament. This theme is especially focused in Paul's Letter to the Romans and particularly in the 7th Chapter. The bondage to meaningless internal forces rings in the words, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but the thing I hate, that I do." Here the threat to meaningfulness is not something external, something from which one can run away, or escape by moving to another land, or turn one's back upon. In the New Testament, the theme of salvation is the same, it is deliverance from those forces which would make life a meaningless mockery. However, the mode is different because the oppressive force is not the same. Thus it would appear that while the aim of salvation is always constant, the means whereby that goal is reached varies with the situation. In some situations there can be no simple Exodus-type deliverance from bondage. One cannot run away from what is inside. Consequently the New Testament develops salvation in a way that is different from the Old Testament. As we shall see in a moment the New Testament mode of deliverance from bondage to forces which make life meaningless speaks more closely to the situation of the parents of handicapped children.

The symbols around which the New Testament paradigm of salvation revolves are the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Theological history has shown that these can be seen from many sides. Surely, there is room for one more way of looking at the New Testament paradigm of salvation. That new way of looking is participation in the act of dying and being resurrected to a new life. Of course, this is not at all new in one way of speaking. The Apostle Paul and other New Testament writers spoke often of "dying with Christ" and "being raised up with him," to new life. Tillich refers to the idea by saying, "The saving power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ is dependent on man's participation in it."[19] However, what is new in this paper is the application of this paradigm, which has generally been applied to ultimates, to situations.

Salvation, as it is generally used in theology, refers to deliverance from ultimate meaninglessness in life. Thus, salvation is usually linked to "eternal life." That is, through salvation these ultimate forces of death which mock life are overcome. There is nothing new to the Christian faith in saying that ". . . the dead in Christ will rise. . . ." (I Thess. 4:16) However, what is being said here that is somewhat new, or at least more emphasized, is that precisely this paradigm of a participation in death and resurrection bring deliverance in situational terms not simply in ultimate terms, which make a mockery of life. The situation we have used as our example of situational salvation is that of the parents of handicapped children.

[19] Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1957), p. 176.

What we have been saying from the first is that the dynamics of living grief is just such a participation in the New Testament mode of salvation. It is a process of having a part of oneself die (perhaps the symbol of being crucified is a good one to convey the agony of the slow death), and then finding that one has been raised up to new life on the other side of the "grave" or whatever has arrested life. To be precise, even at the risk of sounding redundant, those "old dreams" must be put to death as Matheny discovered one night. This in a less than ultimate way is a death of a part of one's self. It is a participation in the dying of Christ. It is the dying of the best, the most loved, the innocent, the most hopeful part of one's self—his dreams for another person. Only after these are dead and buried can there be a hope of resurrection to new life. Thus, one cannot find deliverance from these forces which mock life by simply putting "distance" between himself and his handicapped child. There is no Exodus, only a Good Friday and Easter mode of deliverance when the force which threatens life is not some cruel, external, foreign dictator, but a part of one's own "flesh and blood" which is loved.

The conclusion of this section on a new understanding of salvation is that while theology and Christian Faith may insist upon one formula for salvation from the ultimate force of meaninglessness, we have found something else in terms of salvation in situations less than ultimate. In those less than ultimate situations which threaten to turn life into a meaningless mockery there are actually at least two distinct modes of salvation depending upon what force it is that has reduced life's meaning, and the nature of the hold those forces have. In the Old Testament paradigm there are those situations where it is possible to find salvation by putting space between oneself and the oppressive forces which threaten life. This need not be seen only on a national, historical level. It is also possible to see this in terms of a surgeon removing a cancer. Here the restoration of functional wholeness brings about a deliverance from that which could turn life into a mockery of suffering and ultimately death. Thus, the chance to get away, to escape, to be removed from, or to have removed from you is a paradigm of salvation. It is applicable in situations where deliverance or escape from that which threatens meaningfulness is feasible and possible.

In the New Testament paradigm we find that putting space or distance between the threat and one's self is no answer. To attempt to escape or run away is not only not possible, but it is not beneficial. Deliverance out of the situation was not possible here. What is needed in these situations is a new way of relating to whatever is causing the meaninglessness of life. In the case of sin it is in confession, forgiveness, reconciliation. In other situations where the force mocking life is not sin, this paradigm may take slightly different forms, but it always involves the "death" (psychological extinction) of a part of one's self, and it always involves a dying-rising mode. Living grief was seen as just such an event in the life of those parents whose life had been reduced to meaninglessness by the force of a handicapped child.

SUMMARY

What has been developed in this paper is not just a way of "managing" a handicapped child as if he were a factory or a business and his parents were administrative partners in the business. The way of "living grief" is a process in and through which God meets men with salvation in situations where bondages of love for one's handicapped offspring threatens to make a mockery of life's meaningfulness.

Through the detour, as we called it once, or the experience of dying and rising, as we called it later, the old dreams one had for his child pass away, and the new comes into being—the new reality, the new relationship, the new reason for loving this child. To attempt simply to accept, to grin and bear it without allowing for the death of the old cannot occur anymore than resurrection to new life can precede dying. The process of living grief is the way in which one participates in the dying and rising of Christ in these situations. It is a way of salvation in bondage.

ON BEING RELEVANT

BY ROBERT N. JANACEK

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. . . . then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Genesis 1:27, 2:7-8

IN OUR very "wordy" society certain words have become freighted with prestige. To be "in the know," one must be sure to use them in almost every conversation! The idea seems to be that if we use these words enough, eventually people (even the user) will measure all life by them. Today the word "relevant" seems to be "King."

To what, however, are we to be "relevant"? Every encounter in life inevitably poses the question: "Is this relevant?" From news media advertisement to every daily routine, from education to recreation, and even to religion, we hear that "this may or may not be relevant." While we may not admit it, much of our usage of "relevant" simply implies, "What's in it for me? Is it useful in my life?" Away with any ideal or sense of cosmic purpose! If by some audacious step of altruism one ventures to ask, "What's in it for mankind in general?" the usage is essentially the same. Everything must be adjusted, patterned after, styled to please and satisfy "man."

To be aware or even hint that there might be something greater than man to relate to is often equated with obscurantism, "other worldliness" or more typically, with "an irrelevant gospel!" For some-

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thing or someone to be "relevant" it must be related to man in the immediacy of his concern.

The idea of God is increasingly being projected as one that must be "relevant" to man, *i.e.*, he must relate to our standards. While most devotees of the cult of relativism would not so admit, this attitude is the re-enactment of "the creature over the creator" game. To portray a God in man's image is to invert the biblical picture of man in God's image.

When we turn to the biblical account of God and man, drunk with "relevance," we may ask, "Can this be in any way relevant to our society? Doesn't it concern the past only? These stories tell of ancient cultures, reflect quaint moralism, may even be beautiful alliterative poetry, but—'relevant'? Never!" Too often our pseudo-scientific minds judge this to be the only possible conclusion. To look more deeply would be "dangerously close to" assuming that there might be a "relevant" portrayal of our "nows" in the yesterdays of biblical truth!

> Listen again to the biblical account as we hear: "So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him" (Gen. 1:27). "Then the Lord God formed man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath," or spirit, "of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7).

In our urge to be relevant, have we listened intently to these words? Is there not a familiar ring even in a converse manner? "God created man in His image . . . . the man He formed." Today we strive to create a God of our choosing, forming him to live in our "Garden of Eden" and forbidding him to eat of our tree of knowledge! After all, he could not be beyond us! The serpent of self-deification has thus wrapped his tenuous body around our "relevant thinking," and we are captives to an ancient event which is so very contemporary, so close to daily life.

Centuries before the advent of our Lord a man arose in the dead of night and heard the voice of his God. As one of the few who listened, he opened his heart and ears and said, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Today, as Dr. Sizoo so pungently puts it, man says, "Listen God, man is talking!" When he does not receive an answer "relevant" to finite thought, he builds a "god" of his own image and falls down and "worships" him!

The god we want is too often a god small enough for our pettiness or "restricted area." On one side of the theological spectrum we may try to catch God in a book and feel that if we can hold Him in the Bible, He will not interfere with real life. But again and again that "bigger than life" God, who is God, comes to disturb us, to say that He cannot be "contained"!

On the other side, to one who worships at the shrine of rationalism, God has to fit into a pattern—built by a now not-so-certain science. While the rationalist "knows" that science will eventually discover "all," the true scientist is frightened. The god of power and scientific "know how" somehow does not seem enough. In its deeper moments, a world crying "relevance" suddenly wants to be related to someone beyond! To know that we are related to something or someone more personally than matter is related to matter is suddenly very important.

To us as to our ancient forefathers centuries ago, the golden calf is not enough. We, who scoff idol worshippers, claiming that this only happened to Canaanites, Midianites or to the Russians and Chinese, have made our "golden calf" of "relevance to man only." We have worshipped it and found to our consternation that we are worshipping a self purposely posing as one detached, responsible only to ourselves. This world we live in has demanded a god relevant to its smallness and in doing so has built problems THAT IT HAS NOT THE "BIGNESS" TO DEAL WITH. We have tried to be relevant to everything but God.

The "god" we have tried to make out of the dust of our own soil, the soil of our failures, shortcomings, wanderings, exploitations, lovelessness, immorality, prejudices, and materialism, strangely enough, does not stand the test of true relevance! We have not the wherewithal to breathe "life" into this "image" and so we turn to something or someone more. The world in which we thought we were finding our place, has, as C. S. Lewis so poignantly puts it, instead found its place in us. We must add that God will not merely accept "a place" in this world. For however content or generous we may be to make a place for God (providing He will be relevant!), He will not fit. The world that He formed (Gen. 1:1) and the man in His likeness are, startlingly enough, already his! Our sense of loneliness and longing for something more verifies his priority.

It is easy to talk of "relevancy" in social gatherings, at the office, and even in our home, if life is moving as we think it should! We may study a book like *Honest to God* and feel that this is a "god" we can get along with. This god is contemporary, scientifically respectable, and relevant. We assiduously implore our fellowman to see an "honest god" but we may forget to be honest with God.

Then tragedy strikes, a loved one becomes ill with inoperable cancer. Someone close to you breaks under our contemporary strain and mental illness develops. A lovely child dies suddenly. Our hopes and dreams of a utopia suddenly vanish. Life hurts and there is no one to heal. We have tried so hard to have a relevant life and suddenly we discover that nothing really matters now, except the need to fill an empty heart and life.

Yes, we have tried a little bit of God; we have tried to take Him in one-a-day capsules (or once every week or two), but He did not seem to give enough nourishment for a time of tragedy. Or we may have tried to put Him to a relevant test of our finite life and heated Him over the Bunsen burner of our fiery pace, but He would not be tested this way! God will not be hurried by our testings.

Then amid our hurt, our chagrin at being found out for what we are, finite, inadequate, and in reality related only to God, we cry out for life. Then life is suddenly present and relevant to our need. For the same God that breathed into the image of dust the breath of life will now breathe new life into our empty selves. The life we have been searching for has never been far away, for God. By the alchemy of His touch, a touch made possible by His son who touched not only Heaven but earth, we have life. But how?

In the Gospel of John we hear a parallel hymn of creation,

> "In the beginning was the Word (Christ) and the Word was with God and the Word was God; all things were made and came into existence through Him . . . in Him was Life and the Life was the Light of men."

Our "how" comes in Him who came down to show us how to be new creations in Him. To the darkness of Man's search for relevance comes a Word, a Light to show us how we are related to Him. Relevant? Yes, but relevant to God who in Christ is our Word, our Light. As the amplified version says, "The darkness has never overpowered it, has not absorbed it, has not appropriated it." Today, because of this Word, this Light appropriates the dark and speaks the Word we have wanted to hear, that we are loved and related to Him, because He loves us. God is love. Can anything be more relevant?

THE EFFECT OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE ON A STATED RELIGIOUS BELIEF

BY C. DANIEL BATSON

THE CONTEXT for the study below is briefly as follows: Glock, in "Review of Recent Research Bearing on Religious and Character Formation" in the research supplement to *Religious Education*, Vol. 57 (1962), presents five dimensional factors which he considers basic to the religious attitude structure of a given individual.

> We shall call these dimensions the experiential, the ritualistic, the ideological, the intellectual, and the consequential.
>
> The experiential dimension gives recognition to the fact that all religions have certain expectations, however imprecisely they may be stated, that the religious person will at one time or another achieve direct knowledge of ultimate reality or will experience religious emotion. . . .
>
> The ideological dimension is constituted, on the other hand, by expectations that the religious person will hold to certain beliefs. . . .
>
> The ritualistic dimension encompasses the specifically religious practices expected of religious adherents. It comprises such activities as worship, prayer, participation, in special sacraments, fasting, and the like.
>
> The intellectual dimension has to do with the expectation that the religious person will be informed and knowledgeable about the basic tenets of his faith and its sacred scriptures. The intellectual and the ideological dimensions are clearly related since knowledge of a belief is a necessary condition for its acceptance. However, belief need not follow from knowledge nor, for that matter, does all religious knowledge bear on belief.
>
> The consequential dimension, the last of the five, is different in kind from the first four. It includes all the secular effects of religious belief, practice, experience, and knowledge on the individual. In-

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> cluded under the consequential dimension are all those religious prescriptions which specify what people ought to do and the attitudes they ought to hold as a consequence of their religion.[1]

Glock proposes that future psychometric analysis of religious attitudes take into consideration this breadth of dimensions and seek to determine their existence and nature. Before even a tentative general religious attitude scale is developed, however, one must seek to gain as clear an understanding as possible of the nature and function of each of the five proposed factors.

The present study is set within the context of one of these factors, the ideological dimension, and its relation to the intellectual dimension. To provide a more adequate theoretical framework for this study, Glock's analysis of these two dimensions may be summarized as follows:

Religious Belief (*The Ideological Dimension*) Past studies of religious belief have generally sought to determine the number of beliefs the individual holds and on the basis of this assigned to him to a point on a liberalism-conservatism continuum. But research must inquire not only what people believe; it must also consider the saliency and function of these beliefs. A religious belief structure may be broken down into three parts: those beliefs whose primary role is to warrant the existence of the divine and define its character; those which explain the divine purpose and man's role in it; and those which consider the means by which the divine purpose is to be implemented.[2] Further, non-believers should not be conceived of as a single type as most studies have done; rather distinction must be made between outright rejection of religious beliefs and agnosticism. Finally, religious beliefs may be conceptualized in ways other than belief in traditional religious dogma; for example, such beliefs may be conceptualized as the position adopted to resolve one's concern for discovering purpose and meaning in life or as any deep and ultimate commitment of the individual. "From the point of view of research, there are no true and false definitions of religion, but only more and less fruitful ones."[3]

Religious Knowledge (*The Intellectual Dimension*) Great variety within and between religions as to what the believer should know and what should be the quality of his knowledge makes it difficult to judge the kinds of knowledge to be considered as indicators of religious commitment. To be a measure of religious attitude knowledge of religion must be considered in relation to religious belief. In this area one might measure attitudes toward religious knowledge and study, the importance of such knowledge, the kind of knowledge considered appropriate (Rokeach's examination of *The Open and Closed Mind* [1960]), and the degree of intellectual sophistication used in approaching religious literature, as well as simply the content of one's knowledge of religious facts.

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[1] Pp. S-98-S-99.

[2] It seems Glock's division of belief might be simplified and clarified by referring to beliefs about God (or the divine), man, and the relation between God and man.

[3] Glock, p. S-103.

Thus presented, interaction between the ideological and intellectual dimensions appears in two ways: attention must be given to what one knows about what he believes and to what he believes about what he knows. It is on the latter of these two concerns that the present study focuses. More specifically, our intent is to examine the effects on an individual's already established belief structure of new "knowledge."[4]

Hypothetical impetus for the study is derived from Leon Festinger's research on cognitive dissonance. The specific phenomena under consideration is the effect on a socially stated religious belief of apparently factual evidence which seems to contradict that belief. According to Festinger's hypothesis, under such circumstances a person may try to change his belief; try to acquire new beliefs or information that will increase the existing consonance, causing the total dissonance to be reduced; or forget or reduce the importance of those cognitions that are in a dissonant relationship. Festinger states:

> Man's resourcefulness goes beyond simply protecting a belief. Suppose an individual believes something with his whole heart; suppose further that he has a commitment to this belief and that he has taken irrevocable actions because of it; finally, suppose that he is

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[4] I am here making explicit an aspect of "religious knowledge" which remains more explicit within Glock's system by including in the denotation of this term not only what one knows as a result of belief (i.e. interpretation) but also knowledge which serves as the basis for religious belief. Though the two can never be neatly separated, a valid causal distinction within the life of a given individual between knowledge producing and knowledge resulting from belief does appear not only possible but necessary. Note that the absolute factual nature of "knowledge" as I am using it is not key, rather whether the individual accepts the information as factual. Thus, knowledge for a given person is whatever he considers certain.

> presented with evidence, unequivocal and undeniable evidence, that his belief is wrong: what will happen? The individual will frequently emerge, not only unshaken, but even more convinced of the truth of his beliefs than ever before. Indeed, he may even show new fervor for convincing and converting other people to his view.[5]

Thus stated, Festinger's hypothesis raises at least two immediate questions. First and most basic, how broadly is it applicable? His statement arises from the study of one modern messianic cult, the Seekers and their prediction that Lake City (to use the name Festinger uses in his reports) would be destroyed by a great flood. It seems one may well question whether factors observed under such conditions can or should be generalized beyond the particular group studied or groups of similar nature. As Adorno *et al.* (1950) have indicated with respect to the authoritarian personality, sub-groups exist within our culture whose personality make-up makes generalization from their responses to the culture at large quite dubious. Is, perhaps, the same true of such groups as the Seekers?[6] By attempting to reproduce the conditions Festinger specifies with a population based on a rather wide cultural range, and by considering a belief which is culturally accepted and supported, the present study may provide a tentative answer to such a question.

Second, Roger Brown (1965) appears correct in questioning Festinger's assertion that the individual frequently emerges from the dissonant situation with his belief "not only unshaken, but even more convinced of the truth of his beliefs than ever before." As Brown points out, if this statement were true the Seekers would have to believe that Lake City had indeed been engulfed by a flood and that they had been whisked to safety by flying saucers.[7] Rather than adopting such an approach, the Seekers acquired new "information" and beliefs through an additional message from outer space to reconcile the dissonant factors (see Appendix A). Does such a maneuver actually indicate a strengthening of belief? Applying Glock's dimensional scale introduced above, the only significant increase in attitude strength noted by Festinger appears along the consequential dimension; the group starts pursuing proselytes and publicity. It is only by inference from this activity that Festinger asserts the Seekers showed a stronger conviction of belief. In concentrating specifically on the content of the ideological dimension (though a minimum of religious knowledge of the Western Judeo-Christian tradition is assumed), our study is designed specifically to measure attitude changes along that dimension and may provide some insight toward resolution of this apparent logical discrepancy in Festinger's assertion. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to test Festinger's hypothesis under experimental conditions, giving special attention to problems raised by the questions noted.

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[5] Festinger, *et al.*, "When Prophecy Fails," in Maccoby, E.E., *et al.*, *Readings in Social Psychology*, 3rd ed., 1958, p. 158. In *When Prophecy Fails*, 1956, Festinger summarizes the conditions upon which this statement is based:

1. There must be conviction.
2. There must be commitment to this conviction.
3. The conviction must be amenable to unequivocal disconfirmation.
4. Such unequivocal disconfirmation must occur.
5. Social support must be available subsequent to the disconfirmation. (p. 216)

For a more adequate development of Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance and its relation to religious belief (i.e. the ideological dimension), see Appendix A.

[6] Though data is far too sparse at present for any assertions along this line, that Mrs. Keech, the leader of the Seekers, received her first "automatic handwriting" message from her dead father might add to one's suspicion of dependency and identification needs within such an individual.

I. PROCEDURE

The procedure I have adopted in attempting to carry out the above stated purpose is statistical analysis of data gained from administration of an attitude scale specifically designed for this study to a population (very high teenage predominance) drawn from several socio-economic backgrounds.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS BELIEF INVENTORY

The attitude scale designed, the *Religious Belief Inventory* (a copy of which is included in Appendix B), consists of three parts. First, the subject (S) is asked to classify thirty statements relating to belief in the divinity of Jesus and confidence in the Biblical record on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 indicating strong disagreement, 2 disagree more than agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, etc. In Part II of the Inventory, S is asked to read what is called a reprint from an article which was refused publication in the New York *Times*; the article discribes the discovery of scrolls which appear to demonstrate the Biblical records are falsified, Jesus is not the Son of God, and the reaction of a Christian leader to this information. The third part of the questionnaire again consists of evaluating statements on the same 1 to 5 scale used in Part I; twenty of the thirty-two statements in this latter battery are similar in nature to those in Part I, while the remaining twelve concern S's reaction to the article read in Part II and how it affects his belief concerning whether Jesus was or was not the divine Son of God.

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[7] Cf. Brown, *Social Psychology* (New York, The Free Press, 1965), p. 602.

The article in Part II, as well as the twelve statements in Part III relating to the article, are entirely my own creation. Actual names are used in the article to increase its apparent authenticity; the names were used not in a personal way but only to represent the professional positions to which the names are related.* The fifty statements which compose the belief batteries in Part I and Part III are also my own, though I relied upon two prior religious attitude scales as guides: Broen's *Religious Attitude Inventory* and the Crane and Coffer *A Religious Attitudes Inventory.*[8] An approximate balance is maintained between positive and negative wording of statements. The statements are assigned to their particular place in the inventory by entering a table of random numbers and listing the statements in the order in which the number of their location in my original listing appeared.

2. ADMINISTRATION OF THE RELIGIOUS BELIEF INVENTORY

The R.B.I. was administered to a population of 126, predominantly 14-18 year olds. This population consisted of three groups as follows: 1) 57 girls in the Youth Study Center, Philadelphia, Pa., on April 30, 1966. The Youth Study Center is a temporary detention center operated by the Municipal Court of Philadelphia. The children who pass through the Center are quite predominantly from lower-middle and lower class backgrounds. The R.B.I. was administered to the girls only because their average age level is higher than that for the boys, and they appeared better able to handle the verbal material which the R.B.I. included.[9] 2) 71 members and friends of the four Presbyterian Westminster Fellowship groups which took part in a retreat at Johnsonburg, N.J. on the weekend of April 30-May 1, 1966. This group was characterized by one of their leaders as predominantly middle class with some sprinkling of upper-middle. 3) 8 girls in a ninth grade Sunday School Class at Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church. This group was predominantly upper-middle class.

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* The names of the two well-known gentlemen have been omitted to avoid confusion. Editor

[8] I used the former of these because it is probably the most adequate of such scales presently available, apparently being the only religious attitude scale developed thus far with a sensitivity to factor analysis of the items. The latter was depended upon less heavily, used simply to suggest general directions for statements of religious belief. Though careful analysis of its value as an attitude indicator is as yet quite incomplete, this inventory has the advantage that the statements which it employs were developed from essays written by persons in their late teens across the United States.

[9] It must be admitted that the inventory was not administered to these girls without considerable effort—many of the statements had to be explained and the article in Part II was read aloud by the administrator.

Before the inventories were distributed to a given group of S's, the group was divided into two parts according to how a given S would answer the question, "Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God?" Those who would answer "yes" to this question were asked to sit together in a designated spot and those who would answer "no" or "don't know" also sat together. This division of the group was not expected to be very accurate, but its purpose was simply to create some sense of group identity within each S. The S's were then asked to make their own answer sheets from note book paper which was distributed, being told that the original supply of answer sheets had been exhausted. This procedure was adopted to give the S's some opportunity to adjust to the situation and to create some sense of dependency on the administrator and his directions. The inventories were then distributed, and the introduction read. S's were told they could discuss the questions with those around them (again, seeking to provide social support and interaction) but must mark a separate answer sheet. With 71 S's the (Johnsonburg group) notation was made on the answer sheet of these discussion groups, giving indication of which other S's a given S in this group interacted with. Interaction was high, except in the Lawrenceville group, where none took place although the option was made available. (That this group failed to discuss was probably due to the small size of the group, no one wanting to break the silence; also, social background may have been a factor in this assertion of self-dependency.) S's then proceeded to respond to the inventory as outlined in the instructions, waiting at the end of each part until told to go on, so that unity of group experience might be maintained throughout. After completion and the answer sheets had been collected, the administrator allowed the group to discuss reactions to the test, and the administrator informed the group that the article in Part II was untrue, being careful to point out the reason for the inventory's administration, Festinger's findings and possible implications of their reactions. In each testing situation the attempt was made to discuss personally with anyone who was disturbed by the questionnaire the meaning of this experience for their own belief structure.

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

After the scores of each S on the R.B.I. had been tabulated (cf. Table 1, Appendix D), the population was divided into three groups, Strong Belief, Moderate Belief and Strong Disbelief, according to the strength of the belief expressed in Part I. Second, within each of these three groups the means of the scores for Parts I and III of those who gave indication that they accepted the validity of the article in Part II; either by the way they answered the questions in Part III relating to the article (keying this analysis around item 31), or by comments which they made on their answer sheets,[10] were compared to determine whether the intervention of the article had caused any significant change in strength of belief. Finally, comparison was made within each of the three groups between the means of the scores for Part III of those who believed the article and those who either asserted that the article was untrue or remained neutral to it.[11]

In the latter two of these procedures a distinction was made between those in the Strong Disbelief Group who initially assigned themselves to the believe group (Group B) and those who did not. This distinction was not made for the Strong or Moderate belief groups, because they contain such a preponderance of Group B S's.

II. RESULTS

The above statistical analysis provided the following results:

1. No significant difference was found to exist between scores for

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[10] Admittedly some subjectivity must enter into such an analysis, but the only way in which this subjectivity could be adequately overcome would be through a factor analysis on the twelve items in Part III relating to the article. Such an approach would be necessary because these statements were designed to maintain consistency with the other items on the inventory along the dimension of belief or disbelief in Jesus being the Son of God and thus cannot simply be scored on another dimension—belief or disbelief in the article. I suspect that a factor analysis would indicate the presence of this latter dimension to varying degrees within each of these twelve items, but for the present I must defer to the less adequate subjective analysis, because it is far less time consuming and expensive.

[11] A reliability test was also run by means of a product-moment correlation of the scores of the Moderate Belief Group who accepted the article as true, correlating the scores of each S on Part I to his score on Part III. The result proved significant at the .02 level of confidence (cf. Appendix C).

Part I and Part III for members of the Strong Belief Group who accepted the article as true.

2. No significant difference was found to exist between scores for Part I and Part III for members of the Moderate Belief Group who accepted the article as true.

3. A highly significant difference (.01 level of confidence) was found to exist between means for Parts I and III for members of the Strong Disbelief Group who were also members of Group B and accepted the article as true. This group showed a rise in group mean from 59% to 72% from Part I to Part III.

4. Significance beyond the .10 level of confidence was not demonstrated between the means for Parts I and III for members of the Strong Disbelief Group who were also members of Group A and accepted the article as true. However, this group consisted of a sample of only two; if the same trend which the scores on these two S's show were to be borne out by as many as two more subjects, the results would be highly significant. The mean for this group dropped from 46% for Part I to 30.5% for Part III.

5. In comparing those S's within each of the three major groups which accepted the article as true with those who either rejected it or remained neutral, similar results were found.

   a. No significant difference was found to exist within the Strong Belief Group.
   b. No significant difference was found to exist within the Moderate Belief Group.
   c. Within the Strong Disbelief Group, significance approaching the .05 level of confidence was found to exist for those who assigned themselves to Group A, and high significance (.02) for those who assigned themselves to Group B.

III. DISCUSSION

The above results suggest several factors of interest with regard to Festinger's hypothesis and the discussion of it above. First, with regard to Festinger's hypothesis as stated, the fact that there is no significant difference between the means of the Strong Belief Group who accepted the article as true on Parts I and III of the inventory would appear to reinforce this hypothesis, for the introduction of what the

S's took to be factual material contrary to their belief did not cause any appreciable change in the belief. Such a conclusion gains further support from the lack of difference between scores on Part III for those of the group who accepted the article and those who did not. However, unlike Festinger, we have not limited ourselves to consideration of this strong publicly held and socially supported belief group. Comparison of this group to the other groups under consideration suggests some interesting implications. The similar lack of any significant difference between the means for Parts I and III for the Moderate Belief Group who accepted the article as true indicated that it may not be important whether the belief is very strongly held or not for the phenomenon of rigidity which Festinger notes to be observed. Indeed, the only group which significantly increased the strength of the expression of belief on Part III were those who initially stated a belief (i.e. joined Group B) and then expressed it only very weakly on Part I. Here one is clearly pointed toward the social aspect of the experimental situation which we have created. Those who have placed themselves within a group by their own choice but do not express strong identity with the group when threatened by some external factor, adhere more closely to the group norm as defined. In contrast, as one would expect from Festinger's distinction between Cognitive Dissonance and Cognitive Consonance (Cf. Appendix A), those who aligned themselves with Group A (the agnostic and antithetical group) and accepted the article as true were reinforced in their belief that Jesus was not the Son of God and in their group identity by the article and stated this belief more strongly in Part III. Thus, our study suggests that for the dynamics which Festinger notes to be operative the belief with which dissonance is created need not initially be expressed strongly; rather the impingement of a strong and related external factor, whether consonant or dissonant to one's belief appears to tend to drive him toward a stronger group identity.

With respect to the questions which were raised about Festinger's hypothesis above, the following comments may now be made. First, our study appears to indicate that the dynamics which Festinger noted within the Seekers may, with the qualification just noted, be safely generalized. However, further studies of variations in the nature of this phenomenon are certainly called for. For example, the procedure thus far has been to create dissonance within those of what is labeled a more conservative theological orientation; are liberals equally apt to maintain their beliefs through such dissonance? Or, can any general guidelines be drawn for how one will tend to reduce dissonance due to his socio-economic background? Concerning the second question raised of Festinger's hypothesis (Is the belief actually held as strongly or is behavior along the consequential dimension simply increased?), it would appear from our results that the belief itself tends to maintain its strength when placed in dissonance with another cognitive element under the prescribed circumstances. However, examination of the comments placed on the answer sheets by the S's indicate a process of re-definition may have occurred for some S's in the attempt to reduce dissonance so that the beliefs may no longer have the same content as before.[12] Indeed the principle which seems to be operative appears to have been adequately summarized by Festinger:

> The person may try to change one or more of the beliefs, opinions, or behaviors involved in the dissonance; to acquire new information or beliefs that will increase the existing consonance and thus cause the total dissonance to be reduced; or to forget or reduce the importance of those cognitions that are in a dissonant relationship. (Cf. Appendix A, p. 2)

The difficulty appears to lie in Festinger's almost exclusive concentration on the second of these possibilities, not giving adequate attention to either of the other two. In our study, the first two were found to be the most frequent, though this was probably due to the nature of the study itself.[13] (As noted in Appendix A, the third method of reducing dissonance appears quite common in contemporary society.)

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study lends support to the previous assumption that Festinger's findings concerning the results of cognitive dissonance on the beliefs held by a messianic cult, the Seekers, could be generalized to a wider population. However, we have found indication that for the dynamics which Festinger describes to be operative, the belief need not be expressed strongly, initially, if group consciousness is established. Further, we have found it necessary to emphasize the importance of all of the methods of reduction of dissonance which Festinger proposes, rather than concentrating on one as he tends to do. Finally, we have demonstrated that Festinger's findings concerning effects of dissonance on religious beliefs are amenable to experimental analysis, hopefully paving the way for further empirical research in this area.

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[12] For example, "I love my Jesus and God. If you don't believe in Jesus you do believe in God." However, re-definition may also take place with respect to the nature of the article, leaving the content of the belief unchanged, as for example, "I think the letter (mentioned in the article) was really written but it might have been written by a man who hated Jesus and wanted someone to find it. For anyone who believes it, they're *stupid*. Remember Jesus had many enemies."

[13] An example of the third method might be found in one of our S's, who simply stated at the top of Part III, "I don't want to finish it," and left the remainder of the answer sheet blank.

The implications of this study for one concerned with an understanding of religious belief, and particularly methods for change of religious belief (evangelism), should be clear. Any attempt at factual coercion of an individual away from an identity with a group holding a given belief, no matter how small the group or how ludicrous the belief, appears at best quite dubious. Rather, to seek to bring an individual into a more rewarding religious belief structure is to be sensitive to the personal value which the social aspect of his present belief system performs and how this support may be continued in a context of openness, both to new and different ideas and people.

APPENDIX A

INSIGHTS INTO RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR THROUGH FESTINGER'S THEORY OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

> Worship in common—the sharing of the symbols of religion—has united human groups in the closest ties known to man, yet religious differences have helped to account for some of the fiercest group antagonisms.[1]

Questions as to the origin and nature of these groups in which "the closest ties known to man" are found have within the last few centuries been placed under the scrutiny of scientific thought in both the physical and social sciences. In 1957, Leon Festinger's, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, was released introducing a new approach to the understanding of man's integration of his cognitive structure. Although perhaps indirectly, Festinger's theory presents insights which raise serious questions for anyone interested in religion.

[1] From R. M. Williams, Jr., *Religion, Value Orientations, and Intergroup Conflict*, 1956 in E. E. Maccoby, T. M. Newcomb, and E. L. Hartley, *Readings In Social Psychology*, 3rd ed., 1958, p. 648.

The term cognitive dissonance, as opposed to cognitive consonance, refers generally to the state existing between two cognitions, beliefs, opinions, values, etc., in the cognitive structure (mind) of an individual which are in conflict with one another. Festinger explains the origin of these terms:

> The word "dissonance" was not chosen arbitrarily to denote this motivating state. It was chosen because its ordinary meaning in the English language is close to the technical meaning I want to give it. The synonyms which the dictionary gives for the word "dissonant" are "harsh," "jarring," "grating," "unmelodious," "inharmonious," "inconsistent," "contradictory," "disagreeing," "incongruous," "discrepant." The word, in this ordinary meaning, specifies a relation between two things. In connection with musical tones, where it is usually used, the relation between the tones is such that they sound unpleasant together. In general, one might say that a dissonant relation exists between two things which occur together, if, in some way, they do not belong together or fit together.[2]

Thus, the individual who smokes finds himself, on the presentation of information linking smoking with lung cancer, in a dissonant situation. His tendency may be to become skeptical about the information and the studies from which it is drawn in order to reduce the dissonance within his cognitive structure.[3] Festinger outlines three general methods for reducing cognitive dissonance.

> The person may try to change one or more of the beliefs, opinions, or behaviors involved in the dissonance; to acquire new information or beliefs that will increase the existing consonance and thus cause the total dissonance to be reduced; or to forget or reduce the importance of those cognitions that are in a dissonant relationship.[4]

These attempts at reduction of the dissonance generally result in one of three types of behavior: (1) the individual can accept the new cognition (i.e. be realistic); (2) the individual can rationalize the new cognition; or (3) the individual may find himself in a state of psychological immobility which if maintained may result in disorganization and decomposition of the psychological structure.[5]

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[2] From L. Festinger, "The Motivating Effect Of Cognitive Dissonance" in P. T. Young, *Motivation and Emotion*, 1961, p. 586.

[3] D. Kretch and R. Crutchfield, *Elements of Psychology*, 1958, p. 674.

[4] L. Festinger, H. W. Riecken, and S. Schachter, "When Prophecy Fails," 1956, in Maccoby, Newcomb, and Hartley, p. 158.

[5] The above three results of cognitive dissonance were presented by Don

Since Festinger's introduction of the term, considerable interest has been aroused by the theory of cognitive dissonance, this interest leading to a refinement and expansion of the theory through experimentation. Dissonance theory has been used in studying attitude change, decisional processes, social interactions, and mass behavior, among other things. Naturally, such a widespread use of cognitive dissonance has led to some imprecision in its application as well as to acquisition of many helpful insights. Perhaps the best analysis of the theory of cognitive dissonance at the present time is that by Brehm and Cohen in their *Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance.* In this work, the authors summarize cognitive dissonance theory as follows:

I. Factors Affecting the Magnitude of Dissonance Arousal

The magnitude of dissonance is greater

1. The more attractive the rejected alternative when the person chooses between attractive alternatives.
2. The more negative the characteristics of the chosen alternative when the person chooses between two courses of action.
3. The greater the number of rejected alternatives when the person chooses between attractive alternatives.
4. The less the cognitive overlap between attractive alternatives.
5. The more recent the decision to choose between attractive alternatives.
6. The more important the relevant cognitions surrounding a decision.
7. The less the amount of positive inducement for commitment to discrepant behavior, that is
    (a) the smaller the financial incentives or prizes for commitment.
    (b) the less the justification for commitment.
    (c) the more negative the characteristics of the inducing agent.
8. The greater the choice in commitment to discrepant behavior.
9. The less the coercion applied in order to induce discrepant commitment.
10. The less the person's ability or self-esteem would lead him to perform a discrepant act.
11. The more the person has to engage in the negative behavior (i.e. the more discrepant behavior to which he is committed).

McCallister in lecture in Sociology 211 at the University of Tennessee, Fall, 1963.

12. The more negative information the person has about the discrepant situation to which he is committed.

II. Modes of Dissonance Reduction

1. Attitude change. In this category we include all the changes in evaluation, belief, and opinion that reflect the cognitive realignments resulting from the pressure to reduce existing dissonance.
    (a) opinion change
    (b) evaluation change
2. Exposure to information
3. Recall of information
4. Perceptual distortion
5. Behavioral change.[6]

Cognitive dissonance is applicable to an analysis of religious behavior because dissonance is concerned with commitment, whether in the form of a mental commitment or a commitment put into action. In religion, obviously, one finds commitment. Usually the conflict producing dissonance occurs between some article of faith and some fact in the external world. Since the advent of higher criticism in the analysis of religious documents in the Western world, numerous examples of such conflicts can be cited—Darwinian evolution as opposed to a literal interpretation of Genesis; natural law as opposed to the miracles of Jesus; the psychological readiness of the people for a Messiah as opposed to the divinity of Jesus; results of literary analysis as opposed to the traditional views of the divine inspiration of the Bible; and many more. One finds individuals who adhere to one of these religious beliefs and to whom the corresponding empirical facts are presented taking each of the three general approaches to the reduction of dissonance outlined above—changing their beliefs; acquiring new information to support their belief; or reducing the importance of their religious beliefs.[7]

An interesting and instructive study in this area was done by Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter in 1956 while the birth of the cognitive dissonance theory was in process. The study grew out of the following theory:

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[6] J. W. Brehm and A. R. Cohen, *Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance*, 1962, pp. 303-308. The reader may wonder at the inclusion of such an extended list, but I feel its completeness and accuracy justify its presence. Brehm and Cohen also include experimental validation for each entry, but these have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

[7] One may suppose that this is one of the factors contributing to the distinction between church membership and true religious commitment common among the clergy today.

> Man's resourcefulness goes beyond simply protecting a belief. Suppose an individual believes something with his whole heart; suppose further that he has a commitment to this belief and that he has taken irrevocable actions because of it; finally, suppose that he is presented with evidence, unequivocal and undeniable evidence, that his belief is wrong: what will happen? The individual will frequently emerge, not only unshaken, but even more convinced of the truth of his beliefs than ever before. Indeed, he may even show a new fervor for convincing and converting other people to his view.[8]

To spell out more clearly the conditions under which such behavior is possible, the individual must (1) hold his belief with deep conviction; (2) have committed himself to it in action difficult to undo; (3) have a belief concerned with the real world so that events may refute the belief; (4) recognize the undeniable contradictory evidence; and (5) have social support.

The study concerned itself with the observation of a modern-day messianic cult which predicted the destruction of their home town by flood on December 21, less than a year from the beginning of the cult. A suburban housewife said she had gotten this information by means of "automatic writing" from superior beings from the planet, "Clarion." The cult began to form among her friends, and by means of a doctor friend, the cult was spread to a nearby college town where a group of student believers formed "The Seekers." The authors joined the group in early October and remained in close contact through the next few months. On the evening of December 20, the group sat awaiting a visitor who was to come at midnight to take them to safety. Midnight came and went without the appearance of the visitor. As the group was near disintegration in the early morning, the housewife with whom the superior beings had had their contact announced that she had received the following message explaining why the cataclysm had been called off:

> For this day it is established that there is but one God of Earth and He is in the midst, and from his hand thou hast written these words. And mighty is the word of God—and by his word have ye been saved—for from the mouth of death ye have been delivered and at no

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[8] Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter, p. 156.

> time has there been such a force loosed upon the Earth. Not since the beginning of time upon this Earth has there been such a force of Good and light as now floods this room and that which has been loosed within this room now floods the entire Earth. As thy God has spoken through the two who sit within these walls has he manifested that which he has given thee to do.[9]

The group received this message joyfully and immediately began proselyting and publicizing, these activities having been very limited before that night. Many of "The Seekers," however, who were at home among non-believers on their Christmas vacation and lacked social support reduced the dissonance which occurred by giving up all their beliefs and even concealing their earlier membership.

One cannot help but note the similarity between the origin of this cult and the origin of our major religions, Moses' presentation of the Ten Commandments to the Jewish nation, the beginning of the Christian Church after Pentecost, the origin of Mohammedanism, and so forth. This naturally raises the question to what extent, if any, the compensations due to cognitive dissonance are responsible for our religions. We assume that the cult described above is a fraud, but can or should such assumptions be made about all religion? It seems that to do so would be to employ faulty logic, for our argument would be based on analogy and nothing more. Of course, this gives no assurance that any of the religions in the world today are valid but rather that we have no proof that they are not valid. It would seem, indeed, on closer examination that the source of the dissonance lies not with the basic truths held by the various religions but with the interpretation man puts on these truths. For example, the conflict between evolution theory and the Genesis story is due to a literal *interpretation* of Genesis rather than to the message of the story: God's creation of the universe. Modern theology, becoming aware of this cause of dissonance, has sought to emphasize the temporary nature of any interpretation of basic religious truths.

What then, is the result of our analysis? It should be clear that cognitive dissonance *may* interpret the creation of many of our formal religions and that it may be a factor in the rigidity of one's religious convictions or in the de-emphasis of one's religious convictions as individuals in society seek to reconcile their religious behavior with conclusive contradictory facts in the physical world.

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

APPENDIX B

RELIGIOUS BELIEF INVENTORY

A. INTRODUCTION

The following questionnaire has been devised to be given to small groups in several areas of the United States. Its purpose is to measure the effect of certain information on parts of the American public to determine whether the information should be circulated generally. Those filling out the questionnaire are requested to refrain from discussing it with anyone outside the group immediately present until authorized to do so by the administrator.

The questionnaire consists of three parts, each with its own instructions. *Be sure to read the instructions for each part carefully.* The parts are to be taken in order—first, second, third. The entire group will work on a given part at the same time. That is, when told to turn the page, turn to page 2 and complete Part I, but *do not go on to Part II until told to do so.* If you finish Part I before the rest of the group, simply wait until the others have finished. Similarly, wait after Part II until told to continue to Part III. *Do not turn back to an earlier part once it has been completed.*

Answers to questions are to be placed in the appropriate spaces on the enclosed answer sheet. *Do not mark on the question booklet.*

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

PART I

Below are 30 statements with which you may agree or disagree. In the space on the answer sheet designated Part I place after the number corresponding to the number of the statement a number from 1 to 5 in the following manner:

If you *Strongly Agree* with the statement place a	5
Agree More Than You Disagree	4
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	3
Disagree More Than You Agree	2
Disagree Strongly with the statement	1

Thus, if you strongly agree with the first statement,

1. Jesus actually performed miracles.,

place a 5 beside 1. under Part I on the answer sheet. Work fairly rapidly, not brooding over any one question too long. If, however, you find particular difficulty in deciding how to answer a question, circle your answer. When you have marked all the statements in Part I, wait until told before going on to Part II.

3 1. Jesus actually performed miracles.
3 2. The Bible contains many errors.
3 3. We are assured of life after death, because Christ rose from the dead.
1 4. The disciples made up the story of Jesus' resurrection.
2 5. The Bible contains an answer to every problem.
1 6. The Bible is great literature but nothing more.
3 7. Jesus paid for my sins by dying on the cross.
3 8. The stories in the Bible of Jesus controlling nature are false.
3 9. If science and the Bible disagree, the Christian must believe the Bible.
1 10. The miracles in the Bible can be explained away by our modern knowledge of the world.
5 11. God shows us what He is like through the Bible.
4 12. God's commands for man are in the Bible.
4 13. If Jesus had not died man could not know God.
1 14. If there is a God, He doesn't care about us.
1 15. No one should question what the Bible says.
4 16. The Bible is the Word of God.
1 17. Man is eternally damned unless he accepts Christ as his Savior.
2 18. Jesus was not divine but was a great teacher.
3 19. The Bible must be believed completely.
1 20. Jesus may have deceived his followers in pretending to be the Son of God.
2 21. Jesus was only human.
2 22. We can be saved from sin only by knowing about the life and teachings of Jesus.
2 23. Many of the events recorded in the Bible never happened.
3 24. Jesus, the Son of God, was born of a virgin.
3 25. Jesus was perfect.
5 26. We can know what God is like by looking at Jesus.
1 27. If Jesus thought he was the Son of God, he was wrong.
1 28. The Bible is out of date today.
1 29. Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God is foolish.
5 30. Christ is present in the world today.

STOP! DO NOT TURN PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

PART II

Part II consists of reading the following article. It is a reprint of an article which was written anonymously and was denied publication in the New York *Times* at the request of the World Council of Churches because of the obvious crushing effect it would have on the entire Christian world.

> —Geneva, Switzerland. It was learned today here in Geneva from a top source in the World Council of Churches offices that scholars in Jordan have conclusively proved that the major writings in what is today called the New Testament are fraudulent.
>
> According to the information gained from the unnamed source within the headquarters of the World Council of Churches, Mr. X* assisted by other scholars, has been carefully analyzing a collection of papyrus scrolls discovered in a cave in the Jordanian desert near where the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Contained within this collection of scrolls, X and his associates have found letters, apparently written between the composers of various New Testament books, bluntly stating: "Since our great teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, was killed by the Romans, I am sure we were justified in stealing away his body and claiming that he rose from the dead. For, although his death clearly proves he was not the Son of God as we had hoped, if we did not claim that he was, both his great teaching and our lives as his disciples would be wasted!"
>
> Though X initially suspected the authenticity of these scrolls, he was later quoted as saying, "Through radio-carbon dating and careful study of the Aramaic dialect used in writing these letters, I have found it impossible to deny that the manuscripts are authentic. You can't imagine what a struggle this has been, but I find no alternative but to renounce my former belief that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. I can no longer be a Christian."
>
> When Dr. Y* was confronted with X's statement by this reporter, he at first denied that it was true. After a few minutes of questioning, however, he broke down and admitted, "This thing has got us so upset we're just not sure what to do. We just can't let this story get out!" Apparently the only avenue open to the Church in the twentieth century is the same avenue which it took in the first century—conceal the facts and proclaim Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God, even though it knows such a claim is a lie.

STOP! DO NOT TURN PAGE UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

* These symbols replace the actual names used. Editor.

PART III

Below is another collection of statements, as in Part I. In the space on the answer sheet designated Part III place after the number corresponding to the number of the statement a number from 1 to 5 in the following manner:

If you *Strongly Agree* with the statement place a 5
Agree More Than You Disagree 4
Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3
Disagree More Than You Agree 2
Disagree Strongly with the statement 1

Thus, if you strongly agree with the first statement,

1. The Bible contains God's eternal truth.,

place a 5 beside 1. under Part III on the answer sheet. Work fairly rapidly, not brooding over any one question too long. If, however, you find particular difficulty in deciding how to answer a question, circle your answer. When you have marked all the statements, wait for the rest of the group to finish.

3 1. The Bible contains God's eternal truth.
5 2. In spite of the article (in Part II), I believe Jesus was the Son of God.
5 3. Jesus died for sinners.
1 4. X's discovery truly proves that Jesus was not the Son of God.
1 5. Studies by archaeologists such as X are unimportant for my faith.
2 6. Whoever wrote the article should be arrested.
3 7. The Bible provides proof that God exists.
5 8. God entered the world in Jesus Christ.
2 9. Many of the miracle stories in the Bible were made up.
5 10. It is not unChristian to doubt.
1 11. The story of Jesus' resurrection is untrue.
1 12. Though Jesus' disciples claimed he was the Son of God, he wasn't.
1 13. Science has proven much of the Bible to be wrong.
1 14. The article should be publicized so that those who are Christians can learn the truth.
1 15. The article was probably written by a communist.
1 16. Jesus was nothing more than a great prophet and teacher.
2 17. It's unimportant whether Jesus was divine or not—only his teachings matter.

4 18. Jesus is truly divine.
1 19. Man sins in questioning the truth of the Bible.
3 20. X was never a true Christian.
3 21. Man can only reach God through Christ.
3 22. Just because something is in the Bible doesn't mean it's true.
5 23. Jesus triumphed over death by rising from the grave on Easter morning.
5 24. We must examine the Bible critically through our superior modern knowledge.
5 25. The discoveries mentioned in the article do not disprove that Jesus was God's Son.
1 26. Jesus may have been insane.
3 27. Satan is tempting us by the article.
1 28. To continue to be a Christian after learning of X's discovery is silly.
5 29. Jesus is the Son of God.
5 30. Because we can trust Jesus, we can trust God.
5 31. The article is untrue.
3 32. X isn't even an archaeologist.

If you wish to make any comments about the questionnaire or your reaction to it, do so now at the bottom of the answer sheet.

STOP! WAIT FOR THE REST OF THE GROUP TO FINISH.

SERMON

AN EXPENSIVE LIFE

BY ROBERT R. McGRUTHER

> Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

"The cost of living has risen again," is a phrase that most of us would rather not hear, but the fact remains that it is expensive to live in 1967. Not too long ago housewives picketed supermarkets in an attempt to lower the cost of food. The industry which has not had its employees strike for higher wages is becoming rare. The strike epidemic has even spread to the radio and television industry and the school teachers. Many of us complain when a strike inconveniences us, however, the expense involved in living the way we like to live is very great. In the text from Galatians, Paul is talking about a way of life, an expensive one at that. He speaks of this way of life, oddly enough, in terms of a crucifixion, the formation of a union, and finally of living by faith.

Paul begins the 20th verse of Galatians by saying, "I have been crucified with Christ. . . ." Obviously, Paul is not speaking literally here. He is not saying that he was actually nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ. Paul was a Jew before he was a Christian, and as a Jew he lived by the law of the Jews; the Old Testament law. By saying that he has been crucified with Christ, Paul is talking about becoming dead to the law, his old way of life. After his experience on the road to Damascus Paul began an entirely new way of life, one that was the opposite of his old way. Some of us might know what it is like to have a conversion experience, and to begin a new way of life as a Christian. For most of us, however, this idea probably has little personal meaning. Many of us have always been Christians and have never known

✠ Robert R. McGruther is a Senior candidate for the Bachelor of Divinity degree. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Maryville College in 1965.

ourselves as having been anything else. We have come to Sunday School and church as far back as we can remember. We really do not know what it is like to "die to an old way of life and begin a new one." But this is not all that Paul means by saying that he has been crucified with Christ.

He also means sharing the way of life that led Christ to the cross. It means forgiving and loving other persons rather than condemning them; seeing people as Christ saw them; loving the unlovely. There is a phrase that is frequently heard in Christian churches. I am sure that each of us can think of a person who is just repulsive to us; an "unlovely" person. Christ loves him as much as he loves us. What about the blind beggar on the sidewalk? When I was a little boy my father took my brother and me to Ebbets Field in Brooklyn to see the Dodgers play the St. Louis Cardinals. Driving through Brooklyn on the way home, for the first time I saw men lying on the sidewalk against buildings using newspapers instead of blankets to keep them warm during the night. I could not believe anybody was that poor. There are people like that today and Christ loves them as much as he does us. Being crucified with Christ means working to create harmony among people who naturally have great differences, as Christ did by going to the cross. Christ loved the thief crucified with him just as he loved his disciples. The Jews and Gentiles were different kinds of people, but Jesus Christ became a common foundation for members of both groups.

Being crucified with Christ also means dying with Christ to sin. We all understand that death is always near at hand, yet it is something that we do not like to think about too much. Most of us like to think that it is far from us. But as far as this life is concerned, death is final. It cancels all those important appointments. It solves the problems that we think have no solutions. It releases us from binding contracts and obligations. Death is final.

Is death to sin any different? If we really die to sin doesn't it mean the end of the rule and control of sin over our lives? This is what Paul is talking about in the sixth chapter of the book of Romans. He tells us to realize that we are dead to sin. Between each of us and what we would be if we were not dead to sin there is a gulf as wide as death itself.

The King James Version of the Bible translates this phrase as "I am crucified with Christ." I am not an expert grammarian, but the

KJV probably has the right idea in translating the Greek perfect tense as "I am" rather than "I have been crucified with Christ." The Greek perfect tense means a present state of being which is a result of past action. It is as though we said with Paul that "my old self has died with Christ, but every day I have got to try to deepen my surrender to him and to grow in conformity to him. Being entirely like Christ is far from me, I can not attain it, I am only striving for it, and I still fall far short of complete identification with Christ in the death he died to sin. What is lacking I am constantly working to attain."

After saying that he has died with Christ, Paul continues, ". . . and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." This is the union that is formed and perhaps it is the keynote to all of Paul's thinking. "Christ in me" or "being in Christ" is a phrase that Paul made common. Christ talked in similar terms in the fifteenth chapter of John's gospel when he said, "Abide in me, and I in you," but Paul made it normal. I have never heard anyone talk about being "in" another person. We do not say "I'm in Lyndon Johnson," "I'm in Paul," or anybody else. Even the disciples did not speak like this. They talked about being "with" Christ but not "in" him. Paul means far more than following the good example that Jesus set. We know that that is impossible. It is devastating just to try to follow his example. This phrase means Christ supporting me; Christ carrying me from within; Christ as the motive behind my actions; Christ pervading my whole life.

Our world is rather impersonal. From the phone company, from Public Service, from book, record, and magazine clubs we all get bills, often including an IBM card that says, "do not fold, staple, or mutilate." So we write out a check and mail the IBM card and the check back. But who receives that money? It's as though we deal with a computer rather than a person. I know some people who have hardly ever seen the milkman. The milk is there each morning. If it is not wanted, a note is left in the box. When the time comes to pay the bill an envelope appears in the box. The money goes into the envelope and "the milkman," whoever he is, comes to get it. In a world that is often cold and impersonal, Christ still says to each of us, "I care about you. I want to know you. I want to know you so well that you live in me and I in you."

This union with Christ is something we cannot achieve by our own efforts. It is something that as Christians we must accept by faith. Paul has said that he died with Christ and that he identifies so much with Christ that Christ actually lives in him. He then concludes, ". . . and the life which I now live in flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

I said that Paul was not speaking literally when he said he died with Christ. Here, however, he is speaking literally. For himself and for all Christians, Paul said faith is the way of life. We have heard this phrase so often in church, but some of us might not know what it means. It involves such things as trusting Christ for guidance, and then trusting the guidance itself. It involves obeying his commandments, praying in his name, and giving our love to him. For Paul it meant committing himself completely to God in Christ, and trusting Christ with his most valuable possession: his life. If we claim to be Christians, that is what it should mean for each of us, too.

It's expensive to be a Christian. Paul tells each of us to die with Christ, to let Christ live in us, and then to step out into the unknown trusting our only life to Jesus Christ. The price is high. To live as a Christian is expensive for us, but what about God?

That we are able to live our lives in union with God in Christ was made possible by him, not by Paul, or us, or any other person. We all know how Adam and Eve broke their relationship with God by attempting to be like him. Since then nobody could repair this relationship. But finally God, as though he was the one responsible for the break, decided to repair the relationship by sending his only Son to the cross to die the death meant for us. God stooped that low, paid that high a price for one simple and seemingly foolish reason: He loves us.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN BIBLE STUDY

BY BRUCE O. BOSTON

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to apply a particular theory of learning to certain biblical material, presenting a series of elaborated Bible study outlines based on this learning theory with the intent of using them as the basis for an adult education program in a local congregation.

The learning theory which will be used is the so-called "Loderian paradigm" of conflict resolution. The basic pre-supposition of this learning theory is that man is a creature who intends meaning. An effective way to appropriate this intention is through the elucidation and presentation of a conflict to the learner's subjective mode of consciousness, i.e., that mode of consciousness in which knowledge is intrinsically private. Thus the main goal is not the mere communication of information, but the identification of the learner with the conflict in an existential way. An image is then presented to the learner which contains the potentiality for resolving the conflict; the image must, of course, be appropriate to the conflict itself. The intent is:

> . . . to replace 'conclusions' with creative response, to replace knowledge of the truth with appropriation of the truth, and to put conceptualization in its appropriate role as the fashioner of self-discovery.[1]

This learning theory is based on the studies of Jesse Ziegler (*Psychology and the Teaching Church*) and holds that it is through facing and enduring the pain of a live situation in which the purpose of being in the conflict situation and the situation itself are identical, and that it is within the context of the conflict situation that one is able to appropriate knowledge.[2]

✠ Bruce O. Boston is a Senior candidate for the Bachelor of Divinity degree. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Muskingum College in 1962. This is his second appearance in Dimension.

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[1] Loder, James E., "Conflict Resolution in Christian Education," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, Vol. LVII, No. 3 (March, 1964), p. 20.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

The paper will proceed in this fashion: we will attempt to delineate the conflicts which appear in the passages of Scripture chosen; an image will then be chosen which is appropriate to the conflict, serving as a sort of short-hand way of dealing with the conflict, and which will provide a correlative release of the tension created by the conflict; the image will then be delineated in order that it can become available for action on the part of the learner; finally, a coping operation will be outlined which takes into account the previous steps. This pattern for the learning theory of conflict resolution is that which is presented in the article already cited in this study.

It should be mentioned that in a given passage, it has been discovered that it is possible to expand the paradigm (conflict, image, delineation, and coping) at certain points, particularly with respect to the elaboration of the conflict itself. This corresponds to the "pause" stage in other forms of the paradigm, in which the further elaboration of the conflict serves to sharpen it in the mind of the learner. It is for this reason that the Bible studies presented have more than one heading under the general rubric of "conflict." This does not indicate that the conflict within the passage is multiple (although it may be), but rather serves to indicate that the conflict which is being delineated may have more than one form within the passage itself. This is particularly true of the Matthew 3 passage, for instance.

The images which are brought to the conflict material here presented are those of the author of the paper. It is maintained by some that the image brought to the conflict should be that of the learner, or at best should only be suggested rather than impressed on the learner's mind. As an optimum for the teaching/learning situation this is true, but for the sake of demonstrating the applicability of this learning theory to Bible study, I have chosen to present my own images in order to complete the paradigm. It is a corroboration of the objections to the presentation of full-blown images that I should present my own images as correlative "releasers" of the conflict-tension, because it is these images which appeal to *my* subjective mode of consciousness, but they may not be the images which would serve another.

In the use of the paradigm it should be noted that the steps outlined are not necessarily chronologically sequential. The paradigm is intended to be a functional tool rather than a set of rules or even a description of what happens in the mind of the learner. Thus, there is a great deal of dovetailing and overlapping as we proceed from one major step of the paradigm to the next.

A further point needs to be made here. I have tried *not* to present the material in such a way as to provide closure for the learner, even though I have elaborated on the images and their delineation in some detail. The point which must be kept in mind is that the subjective appropriation of the image be maintained in its integrity, and that even though I may present my images to the conflicts in order to aid in their resolution, the students whom I teach (or those with whom I am doing Bible study) should be able to bring about closure for themselves, depending on the way in which they utilize the image.

Finally, I have made no attempt to explain here either the paradigm or to give a psychological justification for it. I have accepted all that as given and merely applied it to certain biblical passages. Following the presentation of the Bible studies, there will be a brief discussion of the paradigm as an hermeneutical tool.

BIBLE STUDY 1

Text: Genesis 11:1-9

CONTENT: THE STORY OF THE TOWER OF BABEL

I. CONFLICTS WHICH EMERGE FROM THE PASSAGE AND WHICH APPEAL TO THE SUBJECTIVE MODE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

There is first of all the conflict between the point of view of the writer (the Jahwist) and the culture about which he is writing. It is clear from a close study of this passage that the Tower of Babel myth is presented as an attack on the ziggurat mythology of Babylonian religion and culture. It is part of the whole creation account in the Bible and stands over against the concept of cosmic totality in pagan religion and culture, for which the Tower itself is the symbol.

> The cosmic significance of the ziggurat is fully recognized, but at the same time is exposed as an attempt at human self-realization on a super-human level, a reaching for the stars, a manifest example of the inordinate ambition to take heaven by storm. Babylon, the center of the universe, becomes the center of confusion, the very point from which mankind is scattered abroad, the place and sign of God's judgement on man's attempt to be like God.[3]

The Jahwist writer posits the notion of God's dealing with man *in the midst of* man's history, over against the concept of cosmic totality symbolized in the Tower. He sharpens in his reader's mind the distinction which necessarily exists between the idea that God is one who creates *ex nihilo* and is not bound by or to his creation, and the idea that is inherent in the ziggurat mythology of the Babylonians, i.e., that diety stands *within* the cosmic totality of the universe, as an integral *part of* instead of *author of* the ontic nature of reality.

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[3] van Leeuwen, Arend Th., *Christianity in World History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 78.

The stand of the Jahwist has a further implication, for according to earlier passages of the creation account, man is the responsible creature in the order of things. He is given dominion over the created order (Gen. 1:28, 2:15), whereas in the ziggurat mythology man has no possibility for transcendence because he is by his nature enslaved to the cosmos which controls him and which he must appease. There is, therefore, in this passage, the conflict between what van Leeuwen has called the "ontocratic" and the "theocratic" conceptions of the universe and reality.[4]

For van Leeuwen, the whole history of God's dealing with men can be seen as an expanded exegesis of the passage under consideration. The typology of the "ontocratic" and the "theocratic" are both supremely present in the Tower of Babel story, and subsequently, in the whole history of Israel, for:

> Here is raised the protest against the religion of cosmic totality, against the sacralizing of all being, against the supremacy of fate, against the divinizing of Kings and kingdoms. Here a break is made with the everlasting cycle of nature and the timeless presentness of myth. Here history is discovered, where the Covenant between Creator and creation, between the Lord and his people, bursts open the solid oneness of the universe. Here is proper room for man and here the taste of freedom.[5]

What the Tower of Babel myth calls into question is the wedding of the "ontocratic" with the "theocratic," of man with the cosmos, of throne and altar, of God and religion.

A second aspect of the conflict which exists in this passage is less subtle than the first. It is the conflict between man's attempt to make a name for himself and to establish community on the one hand, and the name and the community which he has no right to arrogate to himself because both are really given to him by God. Those who would build their Tower reaching to the dwelling place of God, who

[4] *Ibid., passim.*
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 331.

would "take heaven by storm," seek that which is beyond their rightful ownership. From the point of view of the passage, it is the ultimate in ingratitude to attempt to seize that which God would give as a gift, and it is only the inordinate pride of man which makes this a viable option for him. The conflict exists, therefore, between man's efforts and God's gift, a conflict which appears throughout the Bible and is only finally resolved through the delineations of the functions of Gospel and Law by St. Paul.

II. THE IMAGE WHICH PROVIDES A CORRELATIVE RELEASE OF TENSION.

The image in this case is provided by the passage itself, and can be elucidated from a number of vantage points. The image itself is the Truncate Tower, and it is fleshed out by two correlative events: (1) God's judgement on the name and the community which man arrogates to himself, and (2) the confusion of language which is the rationalized evidence of that judgement. The Truncated Tower is the image *par excellence* of the biblical process of secularization, and it has profound implications for man's action in the world (see III of this study).

The Truncated Tower is the image of the way in which God breaks into the affairs of men; it is the image of his judgement on man's attempt to establish control over God by invading his domain. Man's attempt to unify all aspects of his existence, to forge the last link uniting him with the cosmos, is frustrated by God through the shattering of the one great human unifier, a common language.

III. DELINEATION OF THE IMAGE WHEREBY IT BECOMES AVAILABLE FOR ACTION.

The shape and direction of the secularization process as imagified in the Truncated Tower can be understood in several ways. First, we have the confusion of languages, which implies the pluralism which we all experience in modern technologized society and culture. Man's inability to communicate forces him apart, making the achievement of his own name and the establishment of community increasingly impossible. Instead, man is forced to stand apart from his brother because he tried to stand above God.

But the Truncated Tower is an act of God. It is an "Emmanuel" which can both frustrate and free man. Even though the Truncated Tower symbolizes our division from each other, it also presents the action of God with us as he has placed us back within our proper context, which is not to be found in the vast reaches of the Heavenly Kingdom to which the Tower aspires in its brickward climb, but is rather the symbol of hope for man when he realizes that it is God who is acting *for him* here.

The Truncated Tower need not be a threat to man, even less to the Church, if both are free for their history and the history of the Church's impact on the world. The outcome of the secularization process, of which the Truncated Tower is the primal prototype, is the fact that all men live now in what has been called a "global village," in what is fundamentally one world. The unity of the world which is now being created through the secularizing influence of the Gospel (it would be well to remember that the New Testament anti-type of the Tower of Babel is Pentecost) has a very important implication for the mission of the Church: that the primary emphasis of the Church need not be the conversion of individuals from one religion to another, or from paganism into Christianity, but can become the type of presence and witness which will enable these systems to spring their "ontocratic" pattern (which the Truncated Tower refutes), thus enabling man to get on with the task of humanization in a milieu which has been de-absolutized, thereby making room for God's continued creative action. As van Leeuwen puts it:

> The Tower of Babel has no top; and it is not the business of Christian theology to fill that vacuum, either by providing the unfinished Tower with a Christian top, or by showing that the top which the non-Christian religions are trying to build in fact largely resembles a Christian one, so that at the most it could require what would be a Christian 'finishing touch.'
>
> No: the point of encounter between the Christian faith and the non-Christian religions does not lie at the top, but at the base; or rather it lies in the co-operation of Christians and non-Christians in concentrated effort to 'build ourselves a city and a Tower. . . .'[6]

The implication of the image of the Truncated Tower, then, is that the Christian and the non-Christian now have a common task. They no longer face each other across a dividing wall of hostility. That wall has been broken down once and for all by the mighty acts of God in history, for "once the religious myth has been blown away, there is room for the traditions of the non-Christian cultures to bring forth their treasures,"[7] to make common cause with Christians for the freedom and humanization of man.

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[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 417-18.

A further implication which frees the image for action is that the Church in its mission is now forced to take the phenomenon of secularization seriously. Thus the arena of rapid social change becomes central to the churches' understanding of the shape of their mission in the technocratic era, for that mission has been cast in the mould of the Truncated Tower.

Finally, there is an availability of the Truncated Tower for action on the part of the person who appropriates this image in the sense that the completion of the story of the Tower is found in the antithesis to the attitude of those who tried to build the Tower in the first place. This antithesis is found in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, which presents the logical consequent of our image, namely the image of the pilgrim which emerges out of the ruins of the Tower. Abram is promised that *God* will make of him a great nation, and will make his name great. This stands in direct contrast to the aspirations of the Tower builders, and makes the image of the pilgrim into a model which fits the pattern of secularization which is so vivid in Genesis 11.

IV. COPING OPERATION ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS STEPS.

In coping with the elucidation of the conflict, the presentation of the image and the delineation of the image so that it can be used, we arrive at the following: man uses the image of the Truncated Tower as a form of understanding the secularizing activity of God in the world, indeed, as a way of presenting God as the Great Secularizer; he uses the image to break into and interpret the conflict between his own enchantment with the cosmos (i.e., his religion), and the meaninglessness of his failures to achieve unification with that cosmos; he is offered an opportunity to slip between the horns of the dilemma and to put the question of his relationship with God and with the world in a new way.

There is a danger in the coping operation, and nowhere is this danger more graphically outlined than in Bob Dylan's song, "God on Our Side." The danger is that man may misinterpret the Truncated Tower to see its meaning as merely God's activity for *his group*, rather than God's activity for mankind. Dylan's song, which parodies the American cultural belief that this nation is somehow blessed by God in war because we always stand up for the "right" and have never lost, is an example of how we can mis-appropriate the image. The song tells us that we have zeroed God in on *us*, as opposed to *them*. We stand in constant danger of losing the image of God's liberation of men for one another in the humanization process. This is a neurotic manifestation of the appropriation of the image. It serves only as one example of which many are possible.

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 419.

BIBLE STUDY 2

Text: Daniel 3

CONTENT: SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO IN THE FIERY FURNACE

I. CONFLICTS WHICH EMERGE FROM THE PASSAGE AND WHICH APPEAL TO THE SUBJECTIVE MODE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

There are three different levels of conflict in this passage which can be summarized. We shall enumerate them one by one. First, there is the obvious conflict of idolatry versus the true worship of God. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are called upon to worship an idol on pain of being thrown into a fiery furnace if they refuse. All their religious training had taught them that to obey the command of Nebuchadnezzar at this point would be to cut themselves off from their people as well as from their God. Worshipping idols was abhorrent to them, but the prospects of the fiery furnace were not too promising either! They could not in good conscience participate in the worship of the idol; the only true object of worship, as they saw it, was Jahweh. But not to do so meant certain death. The first conflict, then, is at the level of idolatry versus the true worship of God.

At a second level there is conflict between the path of expediency and "making a stand." Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego could have chosen the route of expediency. They could have obeyed the king's command and then later found some very good reasons for having done so, e.g., "In our heart of hearts we still only worship Jahweh," or "We were only pretending," or "What does it really matter in the long run?" The course of expediency was open to them. But their hearts were torn between this and the notion that here was a place where they could not give in. Their God was important to them. In the past he had not abandoned his people, and even now, while they were in Exile, he had not departed. Could they abandon him now? Could this situation not provide the opportunity to demonstrate their faith in God by not giving in to the threats of Nebuchadnezzar, thereby making a witness to God as they went to martyr's deaths? Would not their God better be served by death than life in this instance, or would he? Thus there was a conflict between "What does it matter in the long run?" and "Here we must refuse; we will not go beyond this point."

The conflict also exists at a third level in this passage, and at this level the conflict is encompassing of the other two. This is the conflict which is represented in their reply to the king:

> O Nebuchadnezzar, . . . if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O King. But if not, be it known to you, O King, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image which you have set up. (3:17-18)

The tension which exists here is the tension between faith-as-assurance based on a knowledge of the past activity of God ("Our God is able . . ."), and faith-as-risk (". . . but if not . . ."). They believed that God was able to bring them safely through the horror that faced them, but it was their willingness to utter the "but if not" which distinguished their faith from mere assurance.

There are elements which heighten the conflict in this passage. These can be mentioned briefly. There were several reasons why Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego need not have taken the course that they did: (i) if they acquiesced to the King's demands they would keep their high positions in his government, and the prestige and wealth that went with them, (ii) they stood to lose their very lives, and (iii) as a consequence they stood to lose all possibility of a future influence in the kingdom for the good of their compatriots and co-religionists.

II. IMAGE WHICH PROVIDES A CORRELATIVE RELEASE OF TENSION.

The image in this case is taken most directly from the third conflict elucidated above. It is the image of a man stepping out over an abyss, not with his eyes closed, but with his eyes open. The man (in this case Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are the "man" of our image) has no certitude that there will be anything there to bear the weight of his foot. Faith, then, is the willingness to step out into the abyss not *knowing*, only *trusting*. Man has only the recollection of stories of the promise which God has given his servants in the past, who have passed that way before. He remembers that his predecessors had found something to bear the weight of the feet they placed into the empty air beyond the edge of the abyss. He does not have security, but he does have trust.

Idolatry is a man stepping out over the abyss *knowing* he will not plummet to his death. The equivalent in this story would have been the sure knowledge of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego that the angel *was* going to be in the furnace, and that not so much as a hair of their heads would be singed. Expediency is making sure that something *is* there to bear the weight of the foot, or thinking up rationalizations so that the step does not have to be made at all. But faith-as-risk says, "Our God is able to save (heal or help) . . . but if he does not choose to do so, even so I will take the step."

III. DELINEATION OF THE IMAGE WHEREBY IT BECOMES AVAILABLE FOR ACTION.

An introduction to the delineation of the image for action is found in a passage from a sermon by Prof. George Hendry:

> In the New Testament (and we would argue in the Old as well), however, faith is rarely pictured as a form of security. On the contrary the New Testament stresses the insecurity of faith, the risks it involves, the trials to which it is exposed. Faith is not like finding shelter from the storm in a safe harbor; it is more like going out from the harbor to face the storm. Probably no one in Christendom has felt this aspect of faith more keenly than Luther. For Luther faith always trembled on the outer edge of despair; he used to describe it as 'confident despair.' He knew that faith has no firm foothold in this world, but always seems suspended over a void . . . the man in the ship who has heard the invitation (from Christ) to come . . . knows he must venture on a fathomless black water.[8]

Taking the step out over the abyss, onto the "fathomless black water," frees man for new and creative possibilities because it allows him to be open to the unknown and to what God will do for and with him there. The image of the void in the Bible is the image of that which God fills with his own creative word (Gen. 1:3).

Furthermore, faith-as-risk, as imagified in the man stepping into the abyss, strips man of his pretensions. It allows him to depend only on the promise which leads him, and not on the idolatries which might bind him. Man becomes open for *in*security rather than security, for *as*surance and trust rather than *in*surance. Thus the life in which the foot is constantly poised on the edge of the abyss becomes a life which is willing to risk the sureties of the present for the sake of the future in which God has unbounded freedom to act in a new way. The foot over the abyss is the life of freedom from the past and for the future.

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[8] Hendry, George S., "The Venture of Faith," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, Vol. LVII, No. 3 (March, 1964), pp. 38-39.

IV. COPING OPERATION ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS STEPS.

In the coping operation man uses the image of the step into the abyss as one which can do three things for him:

> (i) It can shatter his idols and his predilection for idolatry, helping him to develop a positive, future-oriented relationship with his situation and with God as he is acting in the midst of that situation.
>
> (ii) It can allow him to opt for creative insecurity. Man becomes free to grapple with his doubts in such a way as to use them for the glory of God rather than having them hound him back into the womb of security and certainty. It frees man to recognize that doubt is not something that attacks faith from the outside, but is rather something built into the very nature of faith itself, lending it vitality and stimulating the quest for maturity and understanding. It is impossible, says our image, to engage in the encounter with God without taking the element of risk into account. This leads us to the third point.
>
> (iii) The coping operation presents risk as a legitimate, even necessary, option for faith and for the whole theological enterprise. A life in which faith is held as a certainty is as colorful as the decor of a prison, as flavorful as overcooked vegetables, as challenging as a mountain climb up the pitcher's mound. We are so apt to say, "Show me what I shall win, and then I shall risk it." No. "Show me what I must risk, and only then does what I may win have value or meaning."

A final word dealing with biblical literalism cannot be resisted. It is significant that the Temptation of Jesus took the form of an exegetical disputation, with Satan holding out for the literalist interpretation.[9] It was the Tempter who sought to entice Jesus into hiding behind the Scripture in order to avoid the risks and trials of faith. It seems obvious that this is a false stance in our coping operation, and must be rejected, as it was by Jesus, in favor of faith-as-risk.

[9] I am indebted to the sermon cited above for this insight.

BIBLE STUDY 3

Text: Amos 5

CONTENT: GOD'S JUSTICE AND MERCY

I. CONFLICT WHICH EMERGES FROM THE PASSAGE AND WHICH APPEALS TO THE SUBJECTIVE MODE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

This passage presents two very different images of God to the hearer. On the one hand it is full of the wrath, judgement and justice of God. It is obvious from the context in which Amos spoke that these attitudes on the part of God were well deserved. Amos came to Samaria, the wealthiest and most powerful city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel about 750 years before Christ. He has been called one of the great social prophets of the Old Testament. Indeed, the social conditions of the Samaria of his day called out for a prophet. It was a society where the people were given over to every kind of cruelty and oppression. Favorable juridical rulings went to the highest bidder, and for the price of a trifling article a man was sold into slavery. In Samaria itself, might ruled over right, and the gains of robbery, violence and graft filled the treasury.

There was an implication here, and Moses was at no great pains to conceal it. Israel, he said in effect, is over the hill. There is little hope for restoration to the good graces of Jahweh, for he is about to cast them off. The justice of God was on the march, and the Lord would show mercy only to a people who returned his love after they had been purged of their corporate corruption.

Thus, the first conception we get of God is that he is a just Judge who punishes evil-doers. He exacts retribution from his people when they sin (vv. 2-3 *et passim*). He is well aware of the evil which his children do (vv. 7, 10-13). And he is not appeased by religion when it is hypocritical (vv. 4-5).

But another idea of God is also presented in this chapter. The intonations of justice and judgement are so strong that this idea is difficult to find, but it is there nonetheless. We see, when we look closely, that in spite of his wrath, God holds out life to those who seek him (vv. 4b, 6, 14). He holds out the hand of grace to a remnant (v. 15b). It seems that not only is God a just Judge, he is also a merciful and loving Father who entreats his children to enter into a relationship with him for the sake of their own life and their own future.

The conflict which exits in this passage, then, lies at precisely this point. It is the conflict between God the just Judge and God the merciful Father. Both are integrally tied to the nature of God, yet they contain a paradox. How can we fully understand the God who reveals himself to us unless we accept both these parts of God's nature which seem to contradict each other? The contradiction is all the greater because both ideas of God are extended to the people of Israel (and to us as the New Israel) at one and the same time by the same prophet.

II. IMAGE WHICH PRODUCED A CORRELATIVE RELEASE OF TENSION.

The image which best encapsulates and explains this tension for me is that of a coin. Each side of the coin is embossed with a design. If the coin is taken to be an image whereby we can understand the nature of God, we can recognize at once that in the same way you can't have a one-sided coin, you can't have a one-sided God. One side of the coin is embossed with the balances of justice; the other side is stamped with the symbol of mercy—in the case of Amos, grace toward the remnant, in the case of the Christian with the readily appropriable symbol of the Cross. A just God is the natural and fulfilling complement to a merciful God. A just God without mercy would be no more than a tyrant, weighing man against a code which is unattainable. A merciful God without justice would be a pushover. God's justice and his mercy are, as it were, back to front in our understanding of him. Both sides of the coin are "coin"; both sides of God are "God."

III. DELINEATION OF THE IMAGE WHEREBY IT BECOMES AVAILABLE FOR ACTION.

There are four points to keep in mind here:

(i) Each side of the coin is both the pre-condition and the presupposition of the other. We have learned this method of doing theology from Karl Barth. In speaking of the judgement which God has passed on man in Jesus Christ, for instance, Barth has said:

> On the one side it is a verdict which disowns and renounces. The sentence upon him (Jesus as representative of man) as a sinner has been carried out. It cannot be reversed. . . . But the verdict upon man . . . also has a positive meaning and content. It is a verdict

> which recognizes and accepts . . . it declares that God receives man . . . his recognized and well-loved friend.[10]

Both the judgement on man and the acceptance of man are present in Christ at the same point, at that point where the activity of God intersects our lives, both judging us and reconciling us to himself.

(ii) For a coin to "ring true" it cannot be a "Heads I win, tails you lose" operation. It has to be heads and/or tails equally for all. It is important that we not carry the image of the coin to the point where we see it continually in the air, coming down heads or tails at random. This is not what is intended by the image. What is intended is that the coin has an integrity of its own which is bound up in its having "heads-ness" and "tails-ness," i.e., both justice and mercy are necessary to the integrity of the nature of God as we see him interacting with man in history.

(iii) It may be that the only way God can show his mercy to us is by allowing the "justice" side of the coin to act as a down-payment on our debt to our brother. This is clearly what Amos was pleading for in his fifth chapter as he sought to engage the Samaritans in a fruitful dialogue with their social responsibilities before God. God may have to shatter in order to rebuild.

(iv) On the other hand, it may be that the only way in which God accomplishes his justice with us is through his mercy. He offers us forgiveness in order to change lives and to make his mercy available to others through us.

Both the mercy and the justice of God have implications for man, and this is the point at which the image of the coin becomes most appropriable for us. God's justice demands change from one style of life to another. God's mercy also demands change on the part of man, or more accurately, holds out the possibility for re-direction in man's life. No matter how the coin lands there is an implication in it for man.

IV. COPING OPERATION ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS STEPS.

The coping operation demands proper discernment of which side of the coin is operative at the present moment in man's life or in *a* man's life. When the coin comes up "justice" we know that God is working his purpose out for us as he seeks to re-establish himself in our midst. We know what is expected—change. When the coin comes up "mercy" we claim the promise of forgiveness, accept the change that can occur within us, and give thanks to God for his gift.

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[10] Barth, Karl, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), pp. 93-94.

BIBLE STUDY 4

Text: Matthew 3:1-12

CONTENT: THE ENCOUNTER OF JOHN THE BAPTIST WITH THE PHARISEES

I. CONFLICTS EMERGING FROM THE PASSAGE WHICH APPEAL TO THE SUBJECTIVE MODE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The conflicts which emerge from this passage can be seen as three, although they are highly inter-related. First, John the Baptist is seen as the Rebel who posits himself and his message over against the Establishment. If any figure in either the Old or the New Testament can be viewed as disestablishmentarian, that figure is John. Modern scholars have indicated that there is a certain resemblance, which is more than co-incidental, between the message of John and the teachings of the Essene community. The Essenes were a monastic sect which had cut itself off from all involvements with the mainstream of Jewish society because they found it too corrupt. John too found it corrupt, and wasted little breath in announcing that the impending Kingdom of God, of which he was the herald, would eradicate it root and branch. In this passage he makes his announcement to the representatives *par excellence* of that society, the Pharisees.

Secondly, the context of the conflict between John and the Pharisees is seen as a conflict between the Past and the Present and their values on the one hand, and the Future, which was linked to the Kingdom of God and the Messiah on the other. That is to say, the conflict in which John was involved was an historical one, and not merely one of ideology. The struggle had profound historical implications for the nation of Israel and her place in God's design for man. John had appeared on the historical scene at exactly the point where promise was about to give way to fulfillment.

Thirdly, the shape of the struggle or conflict is seen as formed by the old structures (Pharisaism) as over against the new order (the Kingdom of God). Another way in which this conflict can be expressed is with more imagery. "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (3:10). The conflict is drawn up along the lines of the fire which is to come and the trees which will not be able to stand their searing heat. The passage chosen for this study is homiletically fortuitous, for in it we can see the conflict at three different levels: in terms of (a) personality, (b) historical context, and (c) structures. But it is the same conflict.

II. IMAGE WHICH PROVIDES A CORRELATIVE RELEASE OF TENSION.

The image which can help us springs out of the text itself. It is the image of John himself as the revolutionary. The word "revolutionary" is helpful in describing the ministry and the message of the man John as he takes his stance over against the Establishment. It is also helpful in seeing how the transition between the Past/Present and the Future is to take place as an action which God will do. Furthermore, it provides insight into the replacement of the Old Order with the New, of the people of Israel, their religion and their heritage, and the about-to-be-ushered-in Kingdom of God. In this operation, and at every point of the three levels of the struggle, John opts for the stance of the revolutionary.

There is a secondary image here, however, and this was alluded to above. It is the image of fire, an image which is easily associated with that of the revolutionary. This fire, according to John, has two functions: it is an instrument of physical destruction vis-à-vis the old order (3:10); and it is an instrument of energy and power in the hands of him who will usher in the New Order, the Kingdom of God (3:11).

We would do well to realize that the kind of changes which John describes are not subtle, slow, or what we might today call "liberal." His language on this point is unequivocal. Even that most sacred of Israelite possessions, descent from Abraham, is to be swept away and counted for nothing when the New Order is brought into being: ". . . do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (3:9) John is clearly calling for radical changes. Would it be too much to suggest that the bearded prophet was accounted the Israelite equivalent of an irresponsible beatnik?

III. DELINEATION OF THE IMAGE WHEREBY IT BECOMES AVAILABLE FOR ACTION.

The revolutionary as exhibited by John has three functions. First, he calls the old structures of the past and the present into question. This much is clear from his speech to the Pharisees. But what must not be missed is that he calls the Old Order into question according to a functional criterion: whether the elements of the Old Order bear good or bad fruit.

Secondly, John also "puts the question in a new way" regarding present issues and relationships, "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (3:7) is a subtle turning of the tables on the Pharisees who had come down to the Jordan to hear John preach. The one who is under scrutiny is not John, but the Pharisees themselves and all they represent. Is it possible that the "disruptive" elements in our society, the New Left and the draft-card burners for example, are really the ones who are putting the question in a new way for us, rather than being the ones whose activities are questionable?

Thirdly, John is seen in this passage as being the "living telescope" in whom the future Kingdom of God is brought to the eye and the understanding of the present. He is the embodiment of the impinging-on-the-present Future, the announcer of, and the actor in, the eschatological moment.

The image of John as the revolutionary also implies a certain stance, a stance which has three main characteristics. First, his stance is one of freedom. He is not bound to the Old Order but is able to uniquely transcend it in such a way that it is no longer a live option for him because he sees it at its rotten core. His sense of identity and vocation are not bound up in this order or tied to its continuation. He is able to opt for something new, something which has not yet arrived, but also something in which he has confidence because of his insight into the Future which God is bringing.

Secondly, his stance is one of open-endedness and flexibility. We have already alluded to this when we spoke of John's freedom, but more needs to be said. If the primary characteristic of freedom is the ability to transcend and to wait, then the primary characteristic of open-endedness is expectation. John as the revolutionary is willing to wait and see what God will bring to man in the midst of that action. He is ready to move where God is moving, and is not crippled by the weight of a useless ideology. It is precisely the ideologization of the Law and the nation which John is calling into question.

Finally, his stance is one of contextualism. The operative word here, correlating with transcendence and expectation, is involvement. John has no intention of standing outside the struggle or so high above it that he cannot be touched. To realize this we need only recall that he lost his head because of his involvements. He was willing, as a revolutionary, not merely to theorize to his followers, or to shout epithets to the Pharisees, but to act out the necessity of being God's man in the midst of the very revolution which he was announcing.

IV. COPING OPERATION ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS STEPS.

At this point it becomes clear that there are some false solutions to the conflict which surrounded John, and which we must take into consideration:

(i) We can opt out. This is the answer of the "hippie" who would rather "trip it" than get involved. This accomplished nothing and runs the risk of being dishonest because it is in effect a refusal to face the conflict.

(ii) We can work within the structures for change. This is the answer of the liberal in American society, but this has become less and less of an option because of the radical notion of the problem. Herbert Marcuse in his book *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) argues that:

> Advanced technology, together with the ideological ethos accompanying it, is producing a system which tends to be totalitarian. The development of larger and larger political and economic units, together with the integration of the economic and political orders, create a society in which certain material needs of a larger and larger percentage of the population are met, but they have no significant opportunity to participate in the decisions regarding their own future. The system not only has tremendous power, but reduces to ineffectiveness those forces which might otherwise bring constant pressure for social transformation. . . . Countervailing power exists except where it would counter the whole system; and the whole order is so rational in its irrationality that those who oppose it can be portrayed as lacking in judgement or common sense. For Marcuse, these developments in the economic and political spheres are accompanied by an ethos of "secularity" which reduces social science to an analysis of the *given* structures, restricts the universe of discourse, and removes from culture the critical transcending power it once had. The end result may be a one dimensional existence, without vitality, creativity or excitement; a society without power for its own renewal.[11]

What is being argued is that the liberal approach is no longer possible, and the revolutionary course of action may be the only one left for man in a technologized society, and we should realize that there is biblical precedent for the revolutionary option.

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[11] Shaull, Richard M., Conference Address No. 16, World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, Switzerland, July, 1966, p. 3. Italics his.

(iii) We can defend the status quo. This is the answer of conservatism which says, "Look before you leap, then don't leap." This attitude would place us squarely in the midst of the camp of the Pharisees. They displayed an amplitude of this attitude both with respect to John and to Jesus.

The ability to take the revolutionary stance is directly proportional to the extent to which (i), (ii) and (iii) above can be understood as false solutions to the conflict. The revolutionary stance becomes more and more of a possible alternative, not only possible but legitimate.

The coping operation involves, therefore:

(i) the ability to accept the implications of the revolutionary image and its corollary, fire, and thus the possibility of violence,

(ii) opting for the Future instead of the Past/Present,

(iii) opting for what can emerge in terms of structures as that Future unfolds,

(iv) an open-ended and flexible ideology which sits loosely in the context and which is responsive to the "baptism of the Holy Spirit and with fire,"

(v) being free within our involvement so as not to lose our possibility for giving direction because we have been sucked in too far.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The four studies which have been presented here are certainly not exhaustive of the application of the conflict resolution paradigm to biblical material. Many other possibilities come to mind, e.g. the mysterious link between exaltation and suffering in Psalm 89, the tension between the two sons in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, God's grace and man's freedom in Galatians, and the whole book of Job as an attempt to answer the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?".

Neither are the passages selected representative of biblical literature, if for no other reason than that three are from the Old Testament and only one from the New. But I do feel that the passages chosen bear out the thesis that the conflict resolution paradigm can be a useful tool for Bible study, and indeed may be elevated to the level of an hermeneutical principle which is equally as worthy of admission to the text as allegory or typology.

The fundamental problem posed by hermeneutics is: how can sources of the past be understood in their own historical environment and their meaning for the present be adequately perceived? It seems that the conflict resolution paradigm gets high marks on both counts, for it attempts to empower the learner to elucidate the conflict that is *there*, which is an historical expression of the faith of the Hebrew people and of the Church, and to translate that conflict into the subjective mode of consciousness so that it will have existential impact for him.

As W. Dilthey has pointed out, all literary sources are the expression, even the confession of individual life and personal experience.[12] The historian and the student of the Bible must grapple with his hermeneutical principles in order to re-discover the individual life concealed beneath the language of his sources and to bring that life out into the open in such a way that it has meaning for him. As an hermeneutical principle, the conflict resolution paradigm offers much help in this area.

It should be stated, however, that the paradigm is not applicable to all forms of biblical literature, but neither is any other hermeneutical principle. So long as we are willing to set ourselves limits, or allow the text itself to set the limits of our inquiry and methodology, we are not apt to misuse the paradigm.

On the whole, it appears that the story forms of the Bible are those which are most amenable to the use of the paradigm. This is true for two reasons: because the biblical stories are often there with precisely the intention of presenting some sort of conflict, and because they themselves are image-laden. This does not mean that all forms of biblical material are not conducive to conflict resolution. It does mean that it will imply much more work in those cases, both to elucidate the conflict and to discover appropriate images.

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[12] Dinkler, Erich, "Hermeneutics," *Handbook of Christian Theology* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 161.

WHO ME IN THE PEACE MOVEMENT?

BY REV. MR. GILBERT E. DOAN, JR.

A LITTLE girl spoke up in Sunday School one morning and asked, "Teacher, where does God live?" Now, this teacher was a shrewd modern, so she passed the buck. Glancing around the room, she said, "Does anybody know?" A little hand went up. "I know!" "Where?" asked the teacher, licking her theological chops. "In our bathroom," came the answer. "Oh, Why do you say that?" returned the teacher. "Because," said the little girl, "every morning my Daddy goes to the bathroom door and says, 'My God, are you still in there?' "

Cute, isn't it? But I wonder if we are half as intelligent as that little girl is about where the devil lives. We thought for a while that he was in the wicked theater—or the rum-pot, and of course he has not let either of them altogether alone. We also thought we had him localized about fifty miles straight down, but the geologists took care of that. Now it seems that the campus peace movement has got the devil married to Lady-Bird. That is sure enough voodoo, and I will assume that you are psychologically literate enough to see how sick the hate-Johnson syndrome is, or theologically literate enough to give the devil his due for wit enough to stay out of the office of President of the United States.

If you are not only theologically literate but also Biblically literate you will remember St. Luke and his story about an unclean spirit who got kicked out of his house and wandered around lonesome

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for a while and decided he would go back. So he rounded up some colleagues and returned, finding the old place swept clean and nice. So he and his cronies all moved in, "and the last state of that man was worse than the first."

Well, the peace movement thought it banished the devil to the White House, only to discover he had returned to the movement with several cronies. So many you could almost call it a mob. These days the mob spirit is having its way with the campus peace movement. If you have joined the local chapter, haven't you found it does strange things to you? Like making you belt out labor ballads and persecution laments in a sort of solemn existential agony when you have never really had to count on your hammer or your pick for your supper, and when the worst persecution you ever suffered was from some mindless bumbling dean?

Has this mob not said to you, "The mob" (which is how any mob refers to other people) "glorifies war and soldiering?" Do you believe it? It is not true where I come from. Except for a few shrill headline-grabbers, I have seen no vast jingoist, chauvinist, gung-ho militarism. In World War II it was so, and I was a part of it, but it had pretty well crumbled by the time of Korea. By then the dog-face was getting to be seen as a dupe. Today he is increasingly scalded when he answers the call of his country and ignored when he comes home—whole or otherwise. Where I come from, the CO is the hero —if there is any hero any more. I see no recruitment bandwagon. I do see a CO bandwagon. And sometimes this mob movement counts all too heavily in a man's decision about what to do with his "Greetings." It is not only the DAR and the American Legion that go around singing "God is on our side." Imagine that! Or, "Thank God I am not as other men, or even as this Pharisee in uniform."

After all, if anti-communism is inane, naive, and vacuous, what in the world is there to be said for anti-anti-communism? That is the kind of nonsense that leads to sneering at military caskets and rubbing middle class noses into communist slogans and alienating thousands of those who could really be inspired to work for peace. If the campus peace movement gets sucked much further into this kind of paranoid behavior, the whole enterprise will be discredited, it will be held in all the contempt that a guilty, nervous nation is all too ready to heap upon it, and it will be totally ignored. Somehow that does not strike me as the shrewdest or most effective strategy. I can only conclude that the devil has been working overtime to destroy a good thing.

Quite seriously, the campus peace movement has some serious answering to do. It sounds an uncertain trumpet. For instance, we criticize the press for sensationalism, but we pick up our peace mail and read that "More than three hundred participants in the (peace march) went home with what may prove to be the peacemaker's most potent propaganda tool: the set of haunting and horrifying photographs of napalmed Vietnamese children." Is that what those children mean to the peace movement? Propaganda tools?

We criticize the press for managing news. But what of that supersophisticated, superdisestablishment New York journal that starts out a three-part Vietnam serial with the plain admission that the reporter went to Vietnam looking for material damaging to the US?

We criticize the press for "not lying, but just leaving out." How about the record of the campus peace movement? Does the movement rule out war? Why the massive silence on Israel?

Does it rule out violence? Then whence its easy alliance with the propensity toward violence in our cities?

Does it protest our nation's use of temporarily disabling nausea gas in Vietnam as "inhuman," and remain silent on the UAR's use of what is a quite different story: phosgene, nerve gas, mustard gas, which, to my knowledge, has yet to be confessed or renounced?

Is it against nationalism? Its ideologies? Or only in the West?

Is it concerned for indigenous political leadership in Vietnam and our killing of civilian officials? *What is its answer* to the systematic extermination by the Viet Cong of local political leadership, at an average rate of a thousand per year for the last 15 years in that tiny state? By terrorism of the kind that blows up the leader and his associates, and also sets a claymore to go off a few minutes later when the rescuers and the family of the leader have arrived on the scene? What kind of outfit is this peace movement, anyway? God may be on our side. That is for him to decide. But be not deceived. He is not mocked.

> Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

So what do we conclude about our relation to the movement?

Communist influence, managed propaganda, mob spirit are present, even in the peace movement, one of the few reasons for hope in the country today. What do we do? Go out in the garden and eat worms? Go up on the mountains and wait for the escahaton or some such? No, no, no! Join it! If for no other reason that your hands are already too dirty to stay out! The peace movement is one place today where, despite its shagginess, for all its potential captivity to demonism, it is happening. Sure you will get skewered for being a Christian, middle class, and straight. Is that important to you? That you not get skewered? If it were, you would of stayed in bed.

Maybe it will help you, if you do, to remember four things. First, there are thousands of people who are old pros in the movement and who are ready and willing to help you. They have all kinds of information and experience you can use. What is more, they know that the movement is on the edge of trouble. And they want you to help. You will not have to fight it all out alone.

Second, there are not only old pros, but there is also genuine spiritual leadership. Maybe not always of the kind to which you are accustomed, but men who know whom they serve and what serving is. They *do not* advertise it. In the summer just before we were married my wife was overseas with a Mennonite work camp. It changed both of us. But if it had not been for her, I would still be much in the dark about the Mennonites. You too will be near others, unsung and un-PR'ed. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Follow it.

Number two-and-a-half: do not be naive. There *are* communists in the peace movement. They are not the cute old broken-down stage anarchists of Eugene O'Neill. Most communists are more reasonable and less destructive than American communists. And there are others who are in it for what they can get out of it. So? Can you refuse on that account? Keep your head, and know where you stand. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." If you do not keep your head and your heart with all diligence, you will be of little use to anybody.

Now, the third point is closely related to the second, with keeping your head and your heart. There really is a Holy Spirit. A person came to me recently and in the course of our conversation confessed to a fresh rediscovery of the Holy Spirit. He is not just a preacher's notion. He is for real. What that means is that you do not have all the answers and angles nailed down in advance. The spirit will show you the way. If that way turns sour, wait on the Spirit and he will show you another.

There is something about the life of the spirit that is a little reckless, or foolhardy. You have to put yourself into his hands. He is like the wind. He blows where he wants to. You cannot second-guess him. So you might as well stop blowing at your own sails. Just see that they are *set*. It is like what happened at a meeting I went to recently. It was a long meeting, so one night we had a party. Part of it was one of these psycho-games, a sort of post-freudian button-button. Six of us stood around in a tight ring, while the seventh stood on one foot with his eyes closed. Of course he started to fall. One man caught him, and passed him on to the next, and so around the circle. That is really pretty idiotic, isn't it? Some of those people were strangers to each other. The little gathering was not altogether free of hostilities. How could you ever trust them not to dump you on the floor? Well, you couldn't, you know, but you could not be a party-pooper. So we joined, and it worked. It was really kind of a ball. Well, that is a parable of the life in the spirit.

Fourth and last, whatever life in the spirit may cost you, in this movement or another, it is joy. Maybe not the balloony-bubbly kind; maybe sometimes silent, deep, resonant. Do I need to remind you of the reason? Hear Philippe Maury, that incomparable leader in the French resistance and in the WSCF, who died not many months ago. He spoke of his conversation with a communist. The communist, speaking of his struggle for peace, said, "Please understand, you Christians, that for us the situation is far more tragic than for you. We know nothing except history. If you fail, you still have your hope for another world. If we fail, we are left with empty hands and without hope." Maury observes that this communist, in spite of his oversimplification, had understood the Christian approach to politics:

> It is true that our hope of the kingdom delivers us from despair, encourages us to engage in politics without anxiety, and enables us to struggle with a certain sense of humor (That is one thing the devil cannot stand is a sense of humor)—a sense of humor because our human efforts, effective or ineffective, cannot change Christ's victory. He rules the world, he uses us to manifest his lordship, not the Gentiles' type of lordship, yet nothing, not even our failures and betrayals, can prevent his continuing to reign from the beginning of the world to all eternity.

Glory be to the father. . . . . .

RELIGIOUS FORMS OF THE NEGRO GHETTO

BY THOMAS R. WANNER

I. RELIGION IN THE AMERICAN NEGRO COMMUNITY—AN OVERVIEW

RELIGION HAS traditionally been an important aspect of the American Negro community, and Negro churches today claim some twelve million members, better than sixty percent of the Negro population, distributed among more than fifty thousand churches and served by more than forty thousand pastors.[1] The practice of Christianity by the Negro people of the United States began with the evangelization of the slaves, a practice which began slowly in the early seventeenth century and greatly expanded later in the same century with the enactment of laws, first in Maryland and Virginia, assuring that the freedom in Christ promised in baptism in no way implied legal freedom from the condition of servitude.[2] The missionaries to the slaves discovered an emotional and responsive audience for their message of a glorious, future release from earth's transient travails. Concomitantly, the slaves, lonely and isolated, stripped of family, friends, language and freedom, found in the religious meetings a brief interlude of social solidarity. Virtually from its inception, then, the religion of the Negro in America evidenced a social function for its members which would be an integral part of varied religious forms in the Negro community for centuries to come. Indeed, the early theology of escape and a coming eternal glory was soon joined by a strong emphasis on an element identified by Dr. Joseph Washington, now chaplain of Albion College, as the love-justice-equality ethic, an ethic which has

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[1] *The American Negro Reference Book*, ed. John P. Davis (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966), p. 110.

[2] E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York, 1963) p. 20.

found expression through the use of the church as an instrument through which the race could participate in every area of life.[3] The Negro churches have been political arenas in which talented Negro leaders could compete in a way generally forbidden them in the larger society. They have been leaders in Negro education, administrators of mutual aid societies for the widowed, sick, and orphaned, and organizational centers for civil rights activities. So extensive have been its functions that E. Franklin Frazier has termed the Negro church "A Nation Within a Nation."[4] E. U. Essien-Udom has abstracted four major characteristics of these churches:

(1) They are the most successfully organized Negro institutions in the United States.
(2) They have provided the widest community for Negro participation and consequently a sustained sense of ethnic identity.
(3) They have embodied the desire of the race for freedom from white leadership and control and have been an important vehicle for the evolution of Negro leadership.
(4) They were once the most important centers of social life for their members.[5]

All this, however, has been characteristic of churches situated in a Southern, small-town and rural society. This century has seen geographical redistribution of the Negro population of the United States on a massive scale, and with the redistribution has come a challenge to the religious structures which had evolved during the preceding century.

II. A NEW SITUATION—LIFE IN THE CITY

During the last few decades the Negro people of this nation have been a migrant population without parallel in American history. Between 1950 and 1960, one and a half million Negroes left the South, many to take up residence in the North, and others to travel West. Most have moved into the large cities. Indeed, ninety-five percent of the Negroes in the Northern United States are urban residents, and 10.3 million Negro Americans, better than half the Negro population of the nation, live in central or core city areas.[6] These core areas have been dubbed, with some accuracy, "ghettos." The ghetto is marked by a diversity of economic levels and housing situations. It is primarily the home of the lower economic classes, many members of which, are first and second generation migrants from the South. In place of the nice homes, good jobs, and freedoms these migrants had hoped to find in the cities, most have assumed a two-fold burden of frustrating conditions within the ghetto, and real or perceived exploitation and discrimination by the white community without. The forms of religion in the ghetto have not evolved apart from the life of the people there. In many cases they have directly reflected the conditions, and cannot be properly understood without some attempt to comprehend life as lived and perceived by the ghetto resident.

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[3] Joseph R. Washington, Jr., *Black Religion: The Negro and Christianity* in the United States (Boston, 1964), pp. 296-297.

[4] Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*, p. 29.

[5] E. U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism* (Chicago, 1962), pp. 25-27.

The condition within the ghetto is a dismaying self-perpetuation of poverty born of crowded living conditions, unemployment, dismal schools, and narrowed horizons. So crowded can the ghetto become that the president's commission on civil rights reported, in 1959: "If the population density of Harlem's worst blocks obtained in the rest of New York City, the entire population of the United States could fit into three of New York's boroughs."[7] A South Chicago minister has argued strongly for free distribution of birth control devices to Negro youth of the area on the grounds that the crowded conditions render cohabitation and sexual experimentation inevitable. Unemployment, an ever-present threat or reality is markedly high among Negroes.[8] Of those Negroes who are employed, many work at the most menial of jobs. Neither has education seemed to hold the key in the past. Ghetto schools have been notoriously bad for years, and even with a college diploma the future can be, from the perspective of the Negro, tenuous. James Baldwin comments on the frustration felt by himself and his peers at observing the college-educated handymen at work in Harlem. The 86th Congress special commission on unemployment problems reports that five times as many Negro as white men with college degrees are working at relatively low-paying service and laboring jobs.[9] The final element contributing to the self-perpetuation of poverty within the ghetto is the narrowness of horizon bred of an environment marked by few success figures after which the youth can pattern themselves, and a whole array of rules governing life in the ghetto which is apart from the rest of the population. The ghetto is a whole way of life, and it is not impossible nor especially hard to find young people who have had no life experiences outside the ghetto.

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[6] Davis, *The American Negro Reference Book*, p. 338.

[7] Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (New York, 1964), p. 62.

[8] Michael Harrington, "The World of Poverty." *The American Federationist*, Vol. 73, April, 1966, p. 4; and Davis, *The American Negro Reference Book*, p. 340, both give the Negro unemployment rate as being two or two and a half times that of the whites. Harrington further points to a 25% unemployment rate among Negro teenagers.

The other portion of the burden carried by the ghetto residents is the real and perceived exploitation and discrimination wrought by the white community. One of the most frequent encounters of the ghetto resident with the white population comes in the form of small stores and loan organizations which do a flourishing business in outrageous credit and high prices. The forces of the law are another commonplace encounter. The white policeman is often perceived as a symbol of white control and injustice. Tales of police brutality and inept, uncaring public defenders are commonplace. A Philadelphia Negro, a teenager, tells of being in the vicinity of a street fight and being picked up because: "The boys down the block ran, but with you here, boy, I've got a patsy." This perception of the law as a white force set over and against the Negro community was stated succinctly by a Harlem resident debating a white woman on the subject of a civilian review board for the police force of New York City. "You people," he said, "can't think Black!"

The white community is not thought of as thoroughly evil, however. Many whites mean well but lack understanding. The same persons who eagerly devour every proclamation of the physical sciences often view the social sciences as a do-it-yourself sort of thing. They are much dismayed, then, on finding the Negro youth they would like to hire or help to be loud, ill-at-ease, uncouth and unkempt. What they fail to realize is that they are viewing the end product of a social and economic group that has been characterized by material discrimination, disparaging evaluations, and intense frustrations.[10] Edwin G. Berry, executive director of the Chicago Urban League, notes with some amusement the calls he has received during the last few years from white businessmen who want to hire a Negro with a Master's degree in Business Administration. What they want, he observes, is a man who has spent six years preparing for a field which has not even been open to him until some time since he began his studies.[11] Direct exploitation, discrimination, and ineptness are further compounded by the hesitancy of the white community to enter into any real, personal relations with the Negro community. Time and again liberals have been revealed as hypocrites and conservatives as self-centered and provincial in the eyes of the Negro community for their failure to carry through their positions in actual encounter. One civil rights leader has proposed a moratorium on the word "love" and a concurrent emphasis on "confrontation." Improved communications are a prelude to improved understandings, and without them, well-meaning whites will never quite comprehend the ill-concealed hurt and anger of the Negro youth who has been inadvertently addressed by the traditionally degrading term, "boy." A merry-go-round of poverty within and the misunderstanding, discrimination and exploitation by the white community without are daily facts of life in the ghetto.

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[9] Davis, *The American Negro Reference Book*, p. 343.

[10] Joseph S. Himes, "Some Work-related Cultural Deprivations of Lower Class Negro Youths," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 26 (Nov., 1964), pp. 447-449.

III. RELIGION IN THE CITY

The traditional theological themes, of a promised release in a glorious hereafter and of the love-justice-equality ethic might be expected to manifest themselves, along with the traditional social role of the Negro churches, in some form of response to the conditions of the ghetto. Frazier indicates a crucial and obvious vacuum in the life of the newly arrived Negro migrant to the city:

> The most important crisis in the life of the Negro migrant was produced by the absence of the church which had been the center of his social life and a refuge from a hostile white world.[12]

The absence of the traditional support for life's crises and the traditional focal point of one's social life leaves a gap which cannot remain unfilled. Many of the migrants have found the large, established Negro churches suitable for their needs. The Abyssinian Baptist Church of Harlem, claiming 11,000 members with Adam Clayton Powell its pastor, and the 4500 member Zion Baptist Church of pastor Leon Sullivan, located in North Philadelphia are extreme examples. These churches have maintained successful and dynamic programs of economic and social action which have imparted some sense of unity to the huge congregations. Others of the newcomers to the cities have found the large church bodies too impersonal and imposing and long for the intimacy of their small, closely-knit congregations. These have often joined the smaller congregations, often Baptist or Methodist, which prove small enough to maintain intimacy, and large enough to maintain an adequate physical plant and active program. Others of those dissatisfied with the large congregations have played an important part in establishing or maintaining the "storefront" churches which abound in the unoccupied dwellings, stores of the ghettos, and sometimes in homes and basements. Some eventually grow large enough to establish themselves in a church building. Usually identifying themselves as Baptist, Spiritualist, or Holiness churches, the storefront enclaves generally gather about an uneducated "Jackleg" preacher or a preacher currently without a charge.[13] The members of the storefront churches are far more intimate than those of the larger congregations, and the individual in the storefront church is of far more importance to the whole group than he would be in a larger congregation. Usually forsaking policies of economic and social action, the storefronts favor temporary escape from present woes through ecstatic, frenzied gatherings which at the same time grant the participant a glance at the richer life to come. Of the services held at the Faith Pentecostal True Holiness Church of God, located in a Cleveland basement, one enthusiastic member exclaims, "It takes you out of your troubles. Only it's better than dope 'cause it's Jesus in you!"[14] The writer James Baldwin, in his adolescence a popular preacher in one such church, recounts his experiences vividly:

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[11] From a speech delivered at McCormick Seminary, Chicago, September, 1965.

[12] Frazier, *The Negro Church in America,* p. 48.

> The church was very exciting. It took me a long time to disengage myself from this excitement, and on the blindest, most visceral level I never really have, and never will. There is no music like that music, no drama like the drama of the saints rejoicing, the sinners moaning, the tambourines racing, and all the voices coming together and crying Holy unto the Lord. There is still, for me, no pathos quite like the pathos of those multi-colored, worn, somehow triumphant and transfigured faces, speaking from the depths of a visible, tangible, continuing despair of the goodness of the Lord. . . . Nothing that

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[14] Paul Welch, "Bitter Plague of Slums," *Life*, Vol. 59 (December 24, 1965), p. 113.

> has happened to me since equals the power and the glory that I sometimes felt when, in the middle of a sermon, I knew that I was somehow, by some miracle, really carrying, as they said, "The Word" . . . Their cries of "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" and "Yes, Lord!" and "Praise His Name!" and "Preach It, Brother!" sustained and whipped on my solos until we all became equal, wringing wet, singing, and dancing, in anguish and rejoicing, at the foot of the altar.[15]

James Baldwin left the church, however, as have many other ghetto residents. The large churches have been too impersonal for many, and the smaller, ecstatic congregations have not provided sufficient attention to social and economic realities for others. To one youth, for example, the ministers of these smaller churches signify nothing and are simply: "The eatin'est men I know."[16] The Christian churches have always had an important role in the Negro community, however, and they continue to be important. For nearly half-a-century, however, the church and the ministers have been losing influence in the Negro communities.[17] During this same period various cults and religions formed on the themes of Black supremacy or Black nationalism have attracted considerable numbers of dissatisfied ghetto residents.

> Even when Negroes have broken away from traditional churches they have sought, in new religious groups, a way of life which would conform to their needs.[18]

IV. THE CULTS

The cults which have emerged among the Negroes of the cities during the last few decades have been characterized, according to Frazier, by an abandonment of traditional conceptions of God and by an important change in the cult member's thinking about himself.[19] They have been characterized as well, by a diversity of interests and activities in the economic, political, and educational spheres.[20] Almost invariably the cults have been led by an individual claiming a special

[15] James Baldwin, *Fire Next Time* (New York, 1962), pp. 49, 50.

[16] From a conversation with a 19-year-old Negro youth from Detroit, Michigan.

[17] Washington, Baldwin, and St. Clair Drake & Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis* (New York, 1945), all note this declining influence of the minister in the Negro community.

[18] Frazier, *The Negro Church in America,* p. 55.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[20] Arthur Huff Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis* (Philadelphia, 1944), p. 88.

revelation from God or a special relation to God. Bishop Ida Robinson, Father Divine, and Daddy Grace are notable examples. Bishop Robinson founded the Mt. Sinai Holy Church in Philadelphia in 1924 and acquired a considerable following in several cities. Proclaiming authority directly from God, Bishop Robinson imposed strict marital codes and standards of dress on her followers. Father Divine, leader of a cult of the 1920's, tolerated no racial discrimination in true observance of the love-justice-equality ethic. His following was, however, largely Negro. He also imposed strict codes of behavior on his followers and was virtually acclaimed as God himself when a New York judge died a few days after sentencing Father Divine to a jail term for creating a public nuisance.[21] Another cult leader, Daddy Grace, proclaimed:

> Never mind about God. Salvation is by Grace only. Grace has given God a vacation, and since God is on His vacation, don't bother Him . . . If you sin against God, Grace can save you, but if you sin against Grace, God cannot save you.[22]

For the dual needs of identity and positive social action, however, the religions and religiously tinged cults and social action groups working in the name of Black unity or Black supremacy have, for several decades, captured the imagination of large segments of the urban Negro population. Although they are not all religiously oriented, a score or more organizations currently operate in the name of Black Supremacy in New York City alone.[23]

In the eyes of the Black Nationalist, according to Essien-Udom, the Negro's strongest enemy is himself. He must be freed from a subculture which has indoctrinated him, subconsciously, at least, with the creeds of white superiority and Negro inferiority.[24] Repudiation of the term "Negro" is often an important part of the process. The term "Negro" is regarded as a slave designation imposed by the white man. "Brother" and "sister" or "soul brother" and "soul sister" are far more commonly used than "Negro" to indicate racial identity and often to connote the idea of privilege in being part of the race. Disparagement of the white man is also a quite general characteristic of Black nationalist or supremacist groups, and the use of Asiatic culture symbols is not uncommon.

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[21] Frazier, *The Negro Church in America,* p. 58.

[22] Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis,* p. 26.

[23] C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslim in America* (Boston, 1961), p. 33.

[24] Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism,* p. 335.

One of the earliest twentieth century groups to obtain a large following was the Moorish Science Temple, led by Timothy Drew, later to be known as Drew Ali within the movement. Drew had been drawn at one point in his life to the apparent absence of race consciousness in Oriental thought. In 1913 he founded his first temple in Newark, New Jersey, where he taught that Negroes must be called Asiatics or Moorish-Americans and that whites or "Europeans" would soon be destroyed by Allah. The terms "Ethiopian" and "Colored" were a white man's imposition, according to Drew. They meant, respectively, division and something painted.[25] The movement spread westward within a decade, and reached its heights in the mid-twenties as red-fezzed Moors openly flaunted whites in Chicago and Detroit despite Drew's desperate pleas for restraint. Membership in the Moors grew to twenty or thirty thousand, and as a sizeable profit began to be realized through the sale of relics and regalia to the faithful there ensued a struggle for power. Drew was killed in 1929 under mysterious and yet unresolved circumstances and the movement soon floundered. Only a few Moorish temples remain today, but his faithful still maintain a watch by his grave in Chicago to be present for his eventual resurrection. The Moors were perhaps most significant in laying the groundwork and providing many of the first members for the present-day Black Muslims.

The most impressive Black Nationalist movement of the earlier Twentieth century was not, at base, a religious cult, although religion did play a part in it. The Universal Negro Improvement Association was a sweeping attempt at a Black social and economic revolution on an international scale. Its activities were confined primarily, however, to the United States. Founder and leader of the UNIA was Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, whose destiny as a race leader was revealed to him, he wrote, through a reading of Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*:

> I read *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, and then my doom—if I may call it—of being a race leader dawned upon me. . . . I asked, "Where is the Black man's government? Where is his king

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

> and his kingdom? Where is his president, and his country, and his ambassador, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs?" I could not find them, and then I declared, "I will help to make them."[26]

A thirty-eight state tour convinced Garvey that the Negro people of the United States were being led by self-serving men and dependent on white philanthropy. In 1918 and 1919, Negroes returning from a war for "freedom" in Europe were especially cognizant of the widespread and sometimes violent discrimination which they faced in this nation. The summer of 1919 brought race riots in many of the large cities, and Garvey's UNIA soon claimed that its ranks had swelled to two million members.[27] Various estimates of the movement's membership at its height range from one to six million.[28] In 1920, twenty-five nations were represented at Garvey's first International Convention in New York City where he addressed an opening convocation of delegates numbering some twenty-five thousand. Elaborate plans were laid by the association for the eventual liberation of all Africa, and a colony was to be established in Liberia for American Negroes returning to Africa. The UNIA owned a number of businesses and organized its members into auxiliaries such as the Universal Black Cross Nurses and Universal African Motor Corps. The Black Star Steamship Line was organized by Garvey to link the black people of the world in commerce and trade and to carry the American Negroes back to Africa.[29]

While Garvey's movement was not, at base, a religious one, he did provide for his followers' religious inclinations in a subtly dramatic way. Reverend George Alexander McGuire, a former Episcopal Rector, was appointed head of the UNIA African Orthodox Church. McGuire's ordination as a bishop by Archbishop Vilatte of the Syrian Orthodox Church formally linked the African Orthodox Church to the major bodies of Christendom. A black Madonna and Child soon became commonplace in the homes of the adherents, and a black Christ was worshipped. The African Orthodox Church today retains a membership of some six or seven thousand.[30]

Garvey was beset, in a few years, by a multitude of troubles. The

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[26] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[27] Edmund D. Cronon, *Black Moses* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1955), as quoted in Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 58.

[28] Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, p. 37.

[29] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 60.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Liberian Government denounced Garvey's movement in 1924 and leased to the Firestone Rubber Company lands that had been promised to the UNIA. The middle-class Negroes and Negro intellectuals were adamant in their opposition to Garvey.[31] The commercial ventures of the UNIA became involved in commercial difficulties, and finally, in 1925, Garvey was imprisoned for mail fraud. In 1927 he was deported after his sentence had been commuted by President Coolidge. The movement then faded quickly despite Garvey's efforts to maintain it from abroad. Although some Garveyites remain in the large cities (e.g. the African Nationalist Pioneer Movement in New York City), the movement is, for all intents and purposes, dead.

Characteristically, then, the Black Nationalist or Supremacist groups have attempted to give the Negro a new identity as part of a chosen people or to make him an intrinsic part of a great and powerful force. They have provided an outlet for frustration and hate by asserting the actual superiority of the Negro and by providing concrete economic and social structures within which talents and labors could be exercised. In the latter respect they resemble the small Southern church which served as a center for economic, social and political activity. Instead of a better world hereafter, however, these organizations have taught that the Negro will, in this world, prevail. Only one of these organizations has been able, however, to build upon these programs and teachings a following which has continued in some strength for several decades. The Black Muslims, more properly known as the Muslim Holy Temple of Islam, stand far above the other black purist groups today in membership and influence.[32] They have managed to combine religious beliefs, social and economic action, and an intense degradation of the white man in such a way as to maintain a large following of adherents and sympathizers in the ghetto and obtain the grudging respect of many Negro intellectuals and even of some prominent whites.

V. THE BLACK MUSLIMS

For a short time following the death of Drew Ali in 1929, leadership of the Moorish Science Temples had been assumed by one W. D.

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[31] Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*, p. 78.

[32] Some of the Black Nationalist and Black supremacist groups active today include the Royal Ethiopian Jews, First African Corps, Joint Council of Repatriation, World Wide Friends of Africa.

Fard who claimed to be Drew Ali reincarnated.[33] Fard appeared in 1930 in Detroit and founded a temple stating: "I am W. D. Fard . . . and I came from the Holy City of Mecca. More about myself I will not tell you yet, for the time has not yet come. I am your brother. You have not yet seen me in my royal robes."[34] It is estimated that this Detroit branch acquired about eight thousand followers between the years of 1930 and 1939.[35] In 1933 Fard disappeared, and a split ensued over the question of his divinity. One group, maintaining that Fard was one with Allah, established itself in Chicago in late 1933 or early 1934 under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, formerly Elijah Poole. The movement grew slowly through the 1930's and faced a crisis in the early 1940's when more than one hundred of its members were imprisoned for failing or refusing to register for the draft. Elijah Muhammad was imprisoned from 1941 to 1946 for encouraging draft resistance. In post-war years membership increased rapidly, and in the late 1950's growth was especially impressive. In 1955 fifteen temples were scattered across the nation. In March, 1959, there were thirty temples located in twenty-eight cities in fifteen states and the District of Columbia. In December of the same year fifty temples were located in twenty-two states and the District of Columbia supplemented by a number of smaller missions in houses and rented buildings.[36] A recent source indicates that there are currently seventy to eighty mosques and an estimated following of one hundred thousand.[37]

The Muslims are confined to city ghettos, and their rapid growth would indicate that they have, in recent years, painted an attractive pattern of answers to the personal questions of identity and religion and structured an appealing vehicle of social and economic action. All the while they have maintained an essential supremacy, indeed divinity, of the Black people of the world.

The religious teachings of the Muslims center on this Black supremacy and divinity. The Black man, divine by nature, is the original

[33] Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, p. 35.

[34] Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, "They Seek a City" (Garden City, New York, 1945), p. 178, as quoted in Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, p. 43.

[35] Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, p. 44.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[37] Davis, *The American Negro Reference Book*, p. 477, 100,000 is a common estimate of the strength of the Black Muslims. The varying stages of membership recognized by the Muslims and the Muslims own claim of 250,000 render a truly accurate count difficult.

man of the tribe of Shabazz. The white man, on the other hand, was created by Yakub, a black scientist in rebellion against Allah. The white race was allotted six thousand years to rule. That time expired in 1914, and we are now in a period of grace which should end, interestingly enough, in 1984. In reality, it is taught, the period of grace will last only as long as is necessary for the redemption of the chosen of Allah from a white-imposed mental death.[38] In conjunction with the divine origin teachings, a history of the Black man's noble accomplishments is taught to believers and inquirers. Such a history is a glorious and startling revelation to a man whose only former knowledge of his people's history was their period of American servitude. The teaching is thorough and graphic. Groups of Muslims have been witnessed touring the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. where they closely examine evidences gathered from around the world witnessing to the Black man's genius.[39] The Muslims hold forth to the Negro not only a new history and new relation to the divine, but also a new name to replace the name imposed on him by white men. Indeed, Muhammad, if he so desires, may reveal to the follower his true and ancient name.

An abstract, historic grandeur could not alone account for the growth of the Muslims or for the hold of the religion on its followers despite stringent personal regulations. The numerous groups of nationalists and supremacists hold street corner harangues which, in the words of Baldwin: ". . . keep alive in the participants a certain sense of bitterness without which, however futile bitterness may be, they could scarcely remain alive at all."[40] Provisions for this bitterness are part of the Muslim doctrine, but the Muslims seek as well to transform it into positive action by finding some concrete solutions to the despair from which it grows. In the economic sphere the ideal would, of course, be a totally self-sufficient system of businesses and financial operations within their own nation. Indeed, the Muslims are urged to "buy black" and the organization maintains numerous small businesses as well as a few large farms. In the absence of the existence of their own nation, a goal which has been, at best, nebulously expressed, the Muslims are urged to follow strict personal economic measures and to strive for unity as the primary means to freedom from the white man's credit system and to establish themselves as a people uniquely set apart. Tobacco, alcohol, and cosmetics are banned, and the faithful are urged to eat only one meal each day. Thrift and industriousness are strongly encouraged, and the Muslims are paradoxically admonished to: "Observe the operations of the white man. He is successful. He makes no excuses for his failures. He works hard in a collective manner—you do the same."[41]

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[38] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 77.

[39] One such tour was witnessed by the author several years ago, and an institute guide verified that they are not uncommon.

[40] James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name* (New York, 1961), p. 57.

The elevation of the black man and degradation of the white have served to meet the bitterness and frustration not only of those within the movement; they have captured the imagination of many who have not, at least yet, chosen to accept the highly regulated and seemingly sedate life of the Muslim adherent. Within the ghetto is a large number of people, largely youths, whose anti-white fervor inclines them toward the movement in a favorable way even though they may never be able to accept the rigors of full membership. For these youths, as well as for the believer, the harangues of the Muslim leaders often express a much desired rejection of the white world, by violence if necessary.

> Twenty million Americans, so-called Negroes, number a nation within a nation, crying for freedom. We must be free, we must be born. We must be separated or cause the destruction of both.[42]

In a nation where heroism has often been associated with violence, this is heroic talk, particularly to frustrated youth who are certain of the locus of guilt for their frustration. The Muslims have continued to reinforce, for believers and sympathizers, the worst of their beliefs about the white man.

Muslims do, then, appeal to the reservoirs of hate. Elijah Muhammad denies, however, that he teaches hate. Hate, he admits, would be morally justifiable, but he is insistent that he calls for racial unity, not hate.[43] Indeed, the teachings of the Muslims provide, as mentioned above, for inclinations to unity as well as those to hate. The

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[41] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America,* p. 92.

[42] Speech given by Malcolm X in Boston, as reported in New York Amsterdam News, November 7, 1959, as quoted in Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America,* p. 137.

[43] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America,* p. 207.

Muslims and their sympathizers have no special desire for assimilation with the white population. In speaking of assimilation, Essien-Udom points out that such tendencies are somewhat weak among the lower classes because of the realities of their social situation.[44] The world of the whites is perceived as an oppressive monolith; an evil and decayed people. "Why integrate with a dying man?"[45]

To confront the realities of Negro life in the ghetto, then, the Muslims have constructed for their followers a system which enables them to transcend the social, cultural, and psychological environment. The system includes:

(1) The belief that a foundation is being laid for a new nation.
(2) The enjoyment, within the movement, of freedom, fraternity, justice, and equality.
(3) A very real moral and material betterment.[46]

The resultant effect of the Muslim program on the day-to-day lives of the faithful has been pronounced. With a tinge of idealism and an element of truth, the effect has been described as follows:

> Elijah Muhammad has been able to do what generations of welfare workers and committees and resolutions and reports, and housing projects and playgrounds have failed to do: To heal and redeem drunkards and junkies, to convert people who have come out of prison and keep them out, to make men chaste and women virtuous and to invest both men and women with a serenity which hangs about them like an unfailing light. He has done all these things, which our Christian church has spectacularly failed to do.[47]

The regeneration of moral and social values, the economic uplift, and the provision of a society within a society within which one can be black and yet proud has met with tacit approval of some Negro leaders, sympathetic understanding from others, and the respect of some prominent whites. Many Negro leaders have categorically rejected the movement, but C. Eric Lincoln has observed that the NAACP leaders who live closest to the experiences of the Muslim class seem to have the most sympathetic understanding of the movement.[48] This observation would doubtless be applicable as well to leaders other than those of the NAACP. Edwin Berry has said:

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[44] Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, p. 327.

[45] Gordon W. Allport in foreword to Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. ix.

[46] Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, p. 8.

[47] Baldwin, *Fire Next Time*, p. 72.

[48] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 155.

> A guy like this Muslim leader makes more sense than I do to the man in the street who's getting his teeth kicked out. I have a sinking feeling that Elijah Muhammad is significant.[49]

James Baldwin, who has struggled fiercely to understand his race in the context of this society and has made some extensive commentary on the Muslims writes that he cannot possibly accept their conclusions, but, "It is quite impossible to argue with the Muslims concerning the actual state of the Negroes in this country. The truth, after all, is the truth."[50] Gordon Allport, white sociologist and author of *The Nature of Prejudice*, has remarked in a foreword to Lincoln's study that: "While the tenets of this strange sect are fantastic and unbelievable, at the same time the movement as a whole makes good sense and has functional value for its numerous adherents."[51]

Even the churches have seemed oddly complimentary at times. Negro churches have often accepted Muslims as a valid religious group. A crowd of over two thousand once heard Elijah Muhammad speak in a Detroit Baptist church, and another Baptist church, in Richmond, Virginia, voted, during a time of heightened racial tensions, to become a Muslim Temple. Ministers have been among those who have agreed that persecution and denial of common opportunities have been a key factor in the creation of a people responsive to the teachings of the Muslims.

The Muslims are one manifestation of a multi-faceted Black Nationalist, Black Supremacist movement. Internal stability and some notable successes have established the Muslims in a place of some importance on the ghetto scene for an extended period of time. The withdrawal of the influential Malcolm X from the parent organization and his subsequent assassination in February, 1965, has apparently caused some weakening in the organization. In Los Angeles the movement is reported to be on the wane primarily because of its rigorous requirements and its extreme beliefs. Two years of study at the University of al-Azhar, Islam's oldest university, by Akbar, Elijah Muhammad's son and heir apparent might result in a manifestation within the movement at some future time of more orthodox Moslem theology such as was instrumental in Malcolm X's withdrawal.[52]

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[49] Time, August 10, 1959, as quoted in Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 152.

[50] Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name*, p. 70.

[51] Allport, foreword to Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. ix.

In any event, the influence of the Muslims and other nationalist and supremacist groups should not be lightly dismissed on the seeming absurdity of their tenets. Nor should the apparent weakening of the Muslims since the death of Malcolm X be interpreted as a demise of the sentiments which the movement has articulated for several decades.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The Negro is not the only American minority group for whom the religious body has been a prime center of social life nor the only group to face overt discrimination and ghettoed living conditions in the United States. W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole in writing of the Irish, Armenian, Jewish, Polish, Greek, and Russian immigrants of the first third of this century have noted that, "The church is inevitably the first formally organized structure of the ethnic community system."[53] Another source notes: "As a rule, the earliest Jewish communal unit in a new land has been the religious congregation, or the burial society."[54] The persecutions suffered by these immigrants were, at times, more harsh and from higher levels than those suffered by the ghettoed Negroes today. James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor under Presidents Harding and Coolidge, referred to the new immigrants as "rat-men" as opposed to the "beaver-men" of the older racial and national stocks.[55] President Calvin Coolidge and Francis A. Walker, professor of political economy and history at Yale were among others who deprecated the new immigrants. Not until the growth of a scientific opposition with the work of Franz Boas in the fore did the voices of persecution begin to quiet in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

[52] Edwin E. Calverly, "Negro Muslims in Hartford," *Muslim World*, Vol. LV, #4 (October, 1965), p. 344.

[53] W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1945), p. 161.

[54] Abraham G. Duker in Oscar I. Janowsky, *The American Jew* (New York, 1942), p. 134.

[55] Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas, 1963), p. 405. Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Adams, and even Samuel Gompers were others mentioned for their derogatory observations on immigrants from Eastern Europe.

The problems and forms of religion of the ghetto Negro are, however, largely incomparable with those of these other minority groups. Though the parallel of a religious heritage manifesting itself as a social institution of the highest importance for those newly arrived to the city is striking, the color bar renders the situation decisively different and is reflected with clarity in the religious forms. As Warner and Srole accurately noted in their study:

> The future of American ethnic groups is limited; it is likely that they will be quickly absorbed. When this happens one of the great epochs of American history will have ended and another, that of race, will begin.[56]

Warner and Srole further observed, with the help of some elaborate tables:

> The cultural traits of the ethnic group, which have become symbols of inferior status, can be and are changed in time; but the physical traits which have become symbols of inferior status are permanent. Unless the host society changes its methods of evaluation these racial groups are doomed to a permanent inferior ranking.[57]

The racial bar and the awareness of it by the Negro in the ghetto has in no small measure contributed to the continued existence of the Muslims and other nationalist or supremacist groups in the cities. The Christian churches in their various forms have always been important to the people of the ghetto and will no doubt continue to be. The largest and most influential of these are very much aware of the economic and social needs of their people and have often given priority consideration to active programs in these areas. As an expression of the religious heritage of the Negro people of the Southern United States the closely-knit congregations of the ecstatic, storefront churches continue to flourish. As an expression of discontent on the part of an American people with thwarted American desires and dreams, the Muslims and like-minded organizations have continued to flourish and no doubt will continue to prosper with the previously mentioned emphases on concrete social progress, focused frustration and hate, and racial pride. A lack of communication between the people of the ghetto and the white community has been perhaps the most prominent factor in the continuing attitudes of despair and frustration in the ghetto. The ghetto has gained much attention and much understanding in recent years. It takes, however, but a little conversation with the residents of middle-class and lower middle-class neighborhoods bordering the ghettos and with those living in the ghettos to realize how much more understanding is necessary before the Negro people of the ghettos will be able to seek in their forms of religion something more than an organized response to their social and economic conditions. When that day does arrive, all the religious bodies of America will share the benefits, talents, and joys of reconciled people.

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[56] Warner and Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, p. 295.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

ABOUT THE COVER

The Byzantine-inspired double eagle which has become DIMENSION's cover symbol has a long and mysterious history. A single eagle is a more familiar Christian symbol, representing not only St. John the Evangelist, but in some circles baptism, the Ascension of Christ, and the Last Judgment. The double eagle (actually a double-headed eagle) appears most commonly in the Byzantine Empire as an emperor's symbol, suggesting the combination of cross and crown in the single figure of the divinely favored ruler. It was used on coins and tapestries, and as architectural ornamentation. Double eagles can still today be found adorning Greek Orthodox churches, especially in the monasteries of Mt. Athos.

The history of the double eagle before Byzantine times is nearly lost. Specimens have been found in architectural remains of the Hittite kingdoms, leading to speculation that it was introduced into Byzantium and Europe by crusaders returning from Turkey and the Holy Land. Another intriguing theory associates the Roman Janus, two-headed god of beginnings, with the Christian single eagle, which also has to do with the new beginnings of baptism, ascension, and judgment.

DIMENSION's double eagle symbolizes above all the theologian working in two "dimensions," the church and the secular world. It represents academic theology and practical ministry, not as separate, but as two aspects of the same ministry, two perspectives on the saving work of Jesus Christ, two dimensions of the minister's life as a man called by God to be his servant.

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